APRIL 1952

COMMENTARY

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The Study of Man—
The New Historians of Israel — H. SCHMIDT

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Francis Golffing — Isaac Rosenfeld — George Lichtheim
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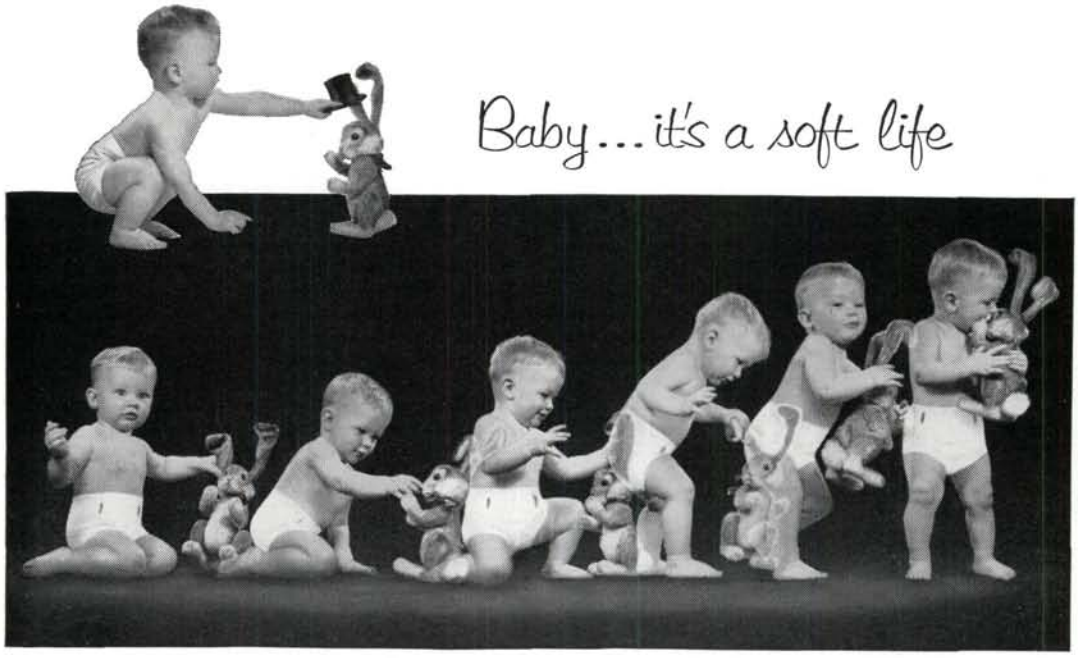

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IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES OF

COMMENTARY

The Diary of Anne Frank

This authentic document tells the story of three years, 1942-1945, in the life of a young Jewish girl of Amsterdam whose fate it was to love, to study, to dream—while hiding in the annex of an office building during the Nazi occupation. Anne Frank died in Bergen-Belsen in March 1945, at the age of sixteen. The diary, first published in Holland after the end of the war, is a beautiful and moving account of youth's search for the normal goods of life in an abnormal world.

The American Vision of V. L. Parrington *Granville Hicks*

Mr. Hicks continues his series—begun with his provocative essay on Lincoln Steffens—of men and books that have given the liberal mind of our day its distinctive cast.

The First Fruits and the Giving of the Law *Theodor H. Gaster*

Continuing his series of articles on the Jewish holidays, Mr. Gaster tells how Shavuoth, or the "Feast of Weeks" (embodied in the Christian year as Pentecost), has been transmuted by the genius of Jewish tradition from a gay harvest festival into a joyous celebration of the giving of the Law.

The Attack on Progressive Education *J. Glenn Gray*

Current outcries against modern American education too often express a rather sinister hatred of ideas and enlightenment in themselves. At the same time, the presence of political quacks among the most vocal critics of "progressivism" and "secularism," Professor Gray advises us, should not be allowed to confuse and undermine the constructive impulse, widely felt among parents and educators alike, towards a critique—and some needed correction—of modern educational theory and practice.

Orthodox Sweets for Heterodox New York *Morris Freedman*

The saga of Barton's candy shops—a success story of European taste, Jewish Orthodoxy, American merchandising. In the department "From the American Scene."

A Variety of Israelis *A. A. Davidson*

Mr. Davidson herds sheep in Israel, which seems to give him a unique point of vantage from which to observe people and circumstances that escape most other portrayers of Israeli life. Readers will recall Mr. Davidson's sketches in our December 1950 issue.

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COMMENTARY

RACIST DRESS REHEARSAL FOR NOVEMBER

The South's "Conservative Revolution" Tastes Victory

SAMUEL LUBELL

IF a drama reporter were to make a political tour of the South today, he might sum up his findings in these terms: "The cast is set, the actors are memorizing their parts, and only the last act has to be written."

Some form of Southern bolt from the national Democratic party this November seems virtually certain. The standard-bearer has been chosen—Senator Richard Russell of Georgia—and all that is still troubling most of the Southern political leaders are questions of tactics: how best to bring off the revolt to which they are already committed. These tactical details probably will not be finally determined until the Republicans have named their candidate for president. By the time that the Democratic convention opens, however, Southern strategy will be fully formulated, down to the final, ringing call for political defiance of Harry S. Truman and what he has come to symbolize.

In theory, this strategy could still be upset by Truman triumphs in the Southern primaries during the spring and early summer. But actually these primary contests will be relatively unimportant. For the battles that determined the political course the South will take this year were fought out in the primaries two years ago. The states where "loyalist" Democrats won in 1950, as in Alabama and Arkansas, will probably send delegations to Chicago this July instructed to work for some compromise that will hold together the Democratic coalition. The states where the "Trumancrats" lost in 1950—Florida, South Carolina, Georgia, Texas, and Mississippi—will be naming delegations that can be expected to join in open revolt, even to the point of helping elect a Republican president, unless someone acceptable to them wins the Democratic nomination.

The 1950 primaries may well be seen by future historians as the turning point in the political history of the modern South—the year that marked the first trial run of a political alliance of Republicans and South-

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EVER since the election of 1936, the theme of a possible Southern breakaway from the national Democratic party has been a favorite one for political speculation. The cleavage on the civil rights issue has become wider with every year, while the original Southern allegiance to the New Deal has been transformed into open hostility. In 1952, according to SAMUEL LUBELL, the possibility of the break has become a near certainty, and he finds a picture in microcosm of things to come in the defeat suffered by Senator Frank Graham in the North Carolina primaries two years ago. Mr. Lubell regularly contributes articles on national affairs to the *Saturday Evening Post* and other periodicals. Much of the material in this article is drawn from a book, *The Future of American Politics*, to be published this month by Harper.

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ern Democrats. Those primaries brought to a dramatic political climax all the many social and economic forces that have been reshaping Southern life since the New Deal. Revolutionary as these changes have been, the 1950 primaries showed that their political effect has been to strengthen the Southern conservatives—a rude awakening from the dream of the New Dealers that the South would be "liberalized" politically as the factory smoke thickened over her skies and Negroes began voting in the Democratic primaries, as educational opportunities widened and individual incomes rose.

PERHAPS the most vivid single illustration of the political impact of what might be termed the "South's conservative revolution" was Senator Frank P. Graham's defeat in the North Carolina primaries two years ago. No man had been more representative of Southern liberalism. Under his presidency the University of North Carolina had become the pioneering center for a courageous self-examination by the South. Graham had fought for labor's right to organize when to do so was to invite being branded a Bolshevik. A devout Christian who did not smoke, drink, or cuss, he had fought efforts to forbid the teaching of evolution in North Carolina and had defended Bertrand Russell's right to speak his agnostic philosophy. As a member of President Truman's Civil Rights Commission, Graham had represented what was believed to be the more enlightened Southern attitude in race relations.

As for North Carolina itself, every book on the South for decades had pointed to North Carolina as the inspiring exception. More industrialized than any other Southern state, it had gone furthest in narrowing the gap in expenditures between white and Negro schools. Its poll tax was lifted in 1920. Not for fifty years had the issue of "white supremacy" been raised in an election campaign. Having had fewer slaves and less of a landed aristocracy in the pre-Civil War period, North Carolina was supposed to be relatively free of race fixations.

This reputation seemed borne out by the May 27, 1950 primary, in which Graham ran 53,000 votes ahead of his closest opponent and came within 1 per cent of the needed majority. On June 24, however, in a runoff, Graham was defeated by 18,000 votes. What had happened to North Carolina's famed progressiveness in those few weeks?

After the first primary I made a detailed study of the vote, sampling the largest cities and several agricultural counties. When the runoff results were announced I went back through these same cities and farming areas, looking up many of the same people with whom I had talked only a few weeks earlier. Some of Graham's supporters have tried to explain his defeat as the result of mistakes in political strategy or of the vast sums spent by his opposition. But what I found in my post-mortem of the vote left no doubt that more basic forces were involved. Far from being an accidental slip-up, Graham's defeat really represented a dress rehearsal for the political role the South will be playing in 1952, and which is the result of the very changes in Southern life that Graham and other Southern liberals have pressed for.

GRAHAM'S political backing is not easily classified. He was supported vigorously by the CIO Textile Workers and by such textile magnates as Spencer Love of Burlington Mills and the owners of the Cone textile chain. In the rural, eastern part of the state, Graham counted heavily on the influence of Governor Kerr Scott, who had a strong following among the small farmers; but Graham also had the support of some of the wealthiest landowners, such as "Cousin Willie" Clark, who ruled Edgecombe County with feudal benevolence. To school teachers Graham personified the progressive ideals of education; but he was also backed by such fundamentalist tycoons as William Henry Belk, the founder of the Belk department store chain, who offers a standing prize of two dollars to any child who can recite the short Presbyterian catechism. If some of Graham's campaigners were cynical party hacks, others, like Mayne Albright, had

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come to worship "Doctor Frank" while students at the University of North Carolina.

The vote in the first primary reflected this oddly mixed coalition—both its strengths and its weaknesses. Traditionally, political warfare in North Carolina is fought along an east-west division. In marked contrast to other Southern states, it is to the west of the fall line, in the industrialized Piedmont area, where the Negro population is relatively low, that the conservative strongholds are to be found. The liberal or "protest" vote comes from the eastern agricultural counties, heavily populated by Negroes who do not vote and by large numbers of white tenants who do. But, cutting across these sectional lines, Graham's vote fell into a pattern unlike any in previous elections in North Carolina.

In the cities Graham was weaker than Truman in labor precincts, but considerably stronger among Negroes and the middle class, carrying some precincts that had gone for Dewey. In Greensboro Graham got 15 per cent more votes than Truman in middle-class precincts, while his vote in the labor boxes was almost a third under Truman's. Labor had no liking for Graham's opponent, Willis A. Smith, a former president of the American Bar Association. But many workers couldn't bring themselves to vote for Graham either, in the face of charges that he favored an FEPC law that would force the hiring of Negroes in place of white workers. Torn in their feelings, large numbers stayed home.

This low labor turnout was in contrast with the astonishing outpouring of voters in the agricultural east. Throughout the state 619,000 ballots were cast in the first primary, 100,000 more than in any previous Democratic primary, but still 20 per cent below the vote for the 1948 general elections. In most of the traditionally "liberal" eastern counties, though, the balloting topped that of the presidential election. At first glance, this was all in Graham's favor. However, had Graham's supporters studied the election returns more carefully they would not have been so happy. In the eastern counties where Graham won, the vote ran only 9 per cent higher than in 1948. In the eastern counties that Willis Smith carried the turnout was at least a fifth higher than in 1948. In flat defiance of the accepted belief that a large vote favored the liberal cause, Graham was faring best where the vote was low.

In the light of what happened later, the significance of the figures is clear. In the first primary some dams of restraint had held back part of the anti-Graham vote. During the runoff, those dams gave way and the full flood of racial and economic bitterness poured forth.

THE second campaign was slow in starting. Under North Carolina law, if the leading candidate falls short of a majority, the next highest candidate can request a runoff. Smith didn't announce that he would seek a runoff until June 7, two days after the Supreme Court, winding up work for the summer, ruled that Pullman dining cars would have to give up the practice of race segregation and that the universities of Texas and Oklahoma would have to admit Negroes. Some observers thought Smith might never have sought a runoff if it were not for these rulings. In any case his forces had not been wasting time. They had been collecting campaign funds and mapping their strategy, preparing leaflets and advertisements, and making their deals with local politicians—even hiring away Graham workers.

Graham's people were at a disadvantage in that they had to wait on Smith's decision. As campaign manager, Graham had chosen Jeff Johnson, now a state Supreme Court justice, who had managed the successful campaign of Melville Broughton for United States Senator in 1948. A likeable, competent middle-of-the-roader, Johnson was neither easily upset nor given to dramatic action. Taking the position that a runoff had to be expected, he held his organization together. But he was handicapped in raising funds until it was clear that there would be a second contest. Even then, with a 53,000 lead, Graham didn't seem to need as much money as before.

Nor were Smith's tactics at the outset such as to arouse Graham's followers to the danger.

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Relatively few Smith advertisements appeared in the papers at first; little radio time was used. Nor was the race issue hit particularly hard. The main emphasis was on "socialism" and "Communism."

Reports filtered back to Graham's headquarters that Smith's advisers were divided as to the wisdom of exploiting the racial issue. Some were said to feel that the chances of overcoming Graham's lead were so small that it would not do to stoke the fires of racial hatred, in view of all the rancor such a campaign would leave behind. Others felt Graham's lead could be overcome by an all-out blitz on the race issue in the closing days of the campaign.

Actually, once Smith was willing to consider making use of the racial issue, the logic of the contest left him little choice. In the first primary he got 250,800 votes to 303,600 for Graham, with 58,700 votes going to Bob Reynolds. In the runoff Reynolds announced for Smith, but even if the whole Reynolds vote were to swing to Smith—which did not happen—Smith still needed a heavy vote to win. "Nigger" was the only cry that could bring out that vote.

"WHATEVER happens, don't let them put you on the defensive," Senator Claude Pepper, after his own defeat in May 1950, had warned Graham. As a matter of campaign tactics, the Graham forces probably would have been well advised to jump in with their own attack, if only to knock the Smith forces off schedule. But this was more easily talked of than done. A wealthy corporation lawyer with textile mill interests, Smith was most vulnerable on his conservative economic views. But a really intensive campaign in support of the economic program of the New Deal would have risked alienating Graham's following among the middle-class and conservative alumni of the University.

To beat off the effects of racial agitation upon labor, a textile worker was put on the air with an eloquent attack on the practice of paying Southern workers less than Northern workers. The Political Action Committee also dug up a photograph of workers at a textile mill "before the coming of Franklin D. Roosevelt" that showed about half of them to have been children. The caption put under the picture talked of fifteen cents an hour pay for a 12-hour day and a 66-hour working week, and asked in heavy type, "Will you go back to this with Willis Smith?" The PAC printed 150,000 copies of this leaflet, and began to circulate it enthusiastically. But when reporters showed it to Graham, he repudiated it, exclaiming, "Neither Mr. Smith nor anyone else can take away the protection the working man has today!" In Shelby County, Graham's local manager refused to allow the leaflet to be distributed among mill workers.

Given the nature of the Graham coalition —a variety of elements with no common economic interests—it was almost impossible to wage an intensive campaign on economic issues. Had Graham been trailing, greater risks might have been taken. But with a 53,000 lead, the safe campaign strategy seemed to be the strictly defensive one of "not rocking the boat."

GRAHAM'S first bad break came eight days before the voting. In Sampson County, where campaign manager Jeff Johnson lived, a middle-aged white woman was robbed, dragged through the woods, and clubbed to death by a Negro. A cousin of the dead woman, a friend of Mrs. Johnson, visited every member of the bereaved family and pleaded with them not to blame the incident on Graham. They listened to her quietly, but when the precinct's ballots in the runoff were counted Smith's vote had doubled.

Dismaying as this "rape" episode was to Jeff Johnson, it does not seem to have had a significant effect on the voting outside the immediate locality. Graham's manager in nearby Lenoir County, Albert W. Cowper, a judge of the Recorder's Court, was a true Graham *aficionado*. As a freshman at Chapel Hill, Cowper had flunked nearly every course and had been about to quit school for good, when Graham persuaded him to stay, and then worked with him regularly at least

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once a week until he made the honor roll. When the depression forced Cowper to drop out of school, Graham had offered to lend him the money to finish his education.

Worried over a possible stirring up of the race question, Cowper checked his precinct workers daily. Every day he got back the same report: "Graham is a cinch to win"—every day, that is, until the Thursday before the Saturday's voting. That Thursday, when some residents of Kinston, the Lenoir County seat, unrolled their afternoon paper, out dropped handbills in shrieking type:

WHITE PEOPLE
WAKE UP
BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE
YOU MAY NOT HAVE ANOTHER CHANCE
DO YOU WANT
NEGROES working beside you, your wife and daughters in your mills and factories?
NEGROES eating beside you in all public eating places?
NEGROES riding beside you, your wife and your daughters in busses, cabs and trains?
NEGROES sleeping in the same hotels and rooming houses?
NEGROES teaching and disciplining your children in school?
NEGROES sitting with you and your family at all public meetings?
NEGROES going to white schools and white children going to Negro schools?
NEGROES to occupy the same hospital rooms with you and your wife and daughters?
NEGROES as your foremen and overseers in the mills?

That evening one of Cowper's workers, a filling station operator, telephoned, "It's going like a brush fire. I can't stop it." The man sounded so disturbed that Cowper drove out to see him. For two hours he argued with the man, going over each specific charge and supplying the facts to refute it. When Cowper left, exhausted, he felt the situation had been saved. Not until after the election did he learn that the filling station owner had broken and swung to Smith.

In those last three days—Thursday, Friday, and Saturday—one couldn't pick up a newspaper in North Carolina without seeing an advertisement proclaiming, "The South Under Attack" or "End of Racial Segregation Proposed." One couldn't listen to the radio for long without a spot announcement cutting in, "Do you know that 28 per cent of North Carolina's population is colored?"—or "The Southern working man must not be sacrificed by FEPC!"

Graham's supporters had made much of the fact that, as a member of Truman's Civil Rights Commission, he had opposed the majority recommendation to put an end to segregation, and that he was against a compulsory Fair Employment Practices law. These arguments seemed to be a weak alibi in the face of an article which had been published after the first primary by a Negro writer outside the state, and which had been picked up by a North Carolina Negro weekly.

Its crucial paragraph went: "The substantial majority that Frank Graham polled in the recent primary was encouraging from many angles. In the first place Negroes supported Graham although he had to recant from some of his liberal positions, as for example the FEPC. Everybody knows that Dr. Graham is in favor of the FEPC; but he had to back down before the terrific onslaught of his enemies who were doing some deadly gunning for the man's political life. So long as Frank Graham's heart is on the right side, Negroes can afford to let him make a 'strategic retreat' if by such retreat he can win over those who are a hundred per cent against Negro advance."

Headlined "Everybody Knows," this was widely circulated by the Smith forces. Beneath the quotation some Smith advertisements ran the voting results in a "few all-Negro precincts":

	Graham	*Smith*
Raleigh No. 10	493	9
Raleigh No. 16	518	18
Durham, Hillside	1,514	7
Durham, Pearson School	1,187	8
Greensboro No. 5	1,231	12
Charlotte No. 2	512	11
Total	5,455	65

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Even more inflammatory were the appeals circulated anonymously, such as those issued by the so-called "Know the Truth Committee." In some counties handbills were mailed to every registered voter. Elsewhere they were left at filling stations, where farmers like to gather and chat. Photographs of Negro soldiers dancing with white girls in British night clubs were scattered around; other leaflets listed prominent Negroes like Richard Wright and Walter White, calling attention to their white wives. But the main issue stressed in this "whispering campaign" was: "Vote for Graham and six months from now your children will be sitting in Negro schools." There were reports of school buses being stopped and the children given leaflets for their parents which asked, "Do you want your children sitting next to Negroes?"

The mood thus built up was not unlike that preceding a lynching. A precinct worker in Wilmington telephoned Graham's manager there and cried hysterically, "Come and take all your literature out of my house! My neighbors won't talk to me!" Graham stickers came off automobiles as people found it uncomfortable to say they were for him. In Raleigh, an eight-year-old schoolboy who spoke up for Graham was beaten up as a "nigger lover" by other children. A Durham election official, favorable to Graham, was awakened during the night by the jangling telephone. When his wife answered, she was asked, "How would you like a little stewed nigger for breakfast?"

In some counties where the Graham campaigners were routine party hacks, an abrupt urge developed to go fishing. "After all, Graham had a big lead," explained one. "I didn't think he needed the votes I could round up. Why should I make enemies of the people I have to live with?"

Appeals to reason were of no avail, as was shown in Beulahville, a tiny trading center for tobacco growers in Duplin County. The town lawyer, Grady Mercer, an alumnus of the University, was an ardent Grahamite. Graham had carried Beulahville handily in the first primary, but afterwards, as the race issue got talked up more and more, he was asked to come to the county in person. One charge being circulated against him was that he had appointed a Negro to West Point. Actually, Graham had given competitive examinations to all eligible youths. A Negro, Leroy Jones, had placed as an alternate, but the appointment itself had gone to a white youth, William Hauser. Graham brought Hauser with him, hoping by this example to show how falsified the whole racial campaign was. When he had finished speaking and left, an angry murmur went through the Beulahville crowd: "Why didn't he bring the nigger he appointed? Who was he trying to fool, showing us that white boy?"

On the day of the voting the Raleigh *News and Observer,* edited by Jonathan Daniels, a strong Graham advocate, ran an eight-column streamer across page one: "LIBERALISM, CONSERVATISM VOTE ISSUES TODAY." That may have seemed like the issue at Graham's headquarters, but Graham had not made it the issue in his campaign. The "issue" troubling most of the voters was probably reflected in a long-distance telephone call that Graham received on the morning of the voting from a Greensboro textile worker. "I want to vote for you," the worker told Graham, "but tell me honestly, if I do will my kids have to go to school with Negroes? I don't want that!"

In Kinston that same morning one man on his way to the polls shouted to a neighbor, "Come on, let's vote for a white man!" Later that afternoon, in Halifax County, a friend sat down to write a sorrowful note to Jeff Johnson: "I've never seen such a mess. . . . The most respected man in town is for Graham but is afraid to open his mouth . . . men are disgusted and won't vote at all. . . ."

An analysis of the vote reveals two dramatic reversals from the first primary. Graham dropped 40,000 votes, while Smith gained 30,000. In the rural east, eighteen counties that Graham had won in the first primary swung to Smith. Only nine stuck with Graham. This shift may seem just the old story of uneducated farmers inflamed by

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the cry of "nigger." But why hadn't the racial feeling broken through in the first primary?

That racial bitterness was there all the time would seem clear from an incident in Lenoir County. In the first primary a Negro ran for one of eighteen posts as magistrate, a minor position akin to justice of the peace and paying no salary. After the Negro filed, eighteen white candidates were persuaded to run to make sure he would be beaten. Later, few of these whites even bothered to take office. Strong as this racial feeling was, it did not turn upon Graham in the first primary. Why?

The answer is that in the first primary, various local officials were also being elected. One candidate for the state legislature, a "dry," was being opposed by local business interests, who feared he might deprive the county seat of its liquor revenue. Fearful of alienating the Graham voters, these business elements had soft-pedaled all talk of race. With the "dry" defeated, the business community came out openly for Smith and encouraged the spread of racial hatred.

That happened throughout the state. In the first primary, with elections for sheriff and other county offices at stake, the local politicos had dampened the racial feeling for fear their local candidates might be singed. Governor Scott was supporting Graham and the county candidates did not want the force of the state administration thrown against them. The bulk of the "Hessians," as the paid party workers are sometimes called, were held in line by those interested in the local races. With these contests out of the way, the "Hessians" were free to make their deals with the Smith forces, many using the race issue as a cover for their switch. The same "better elements" in the community who had kept the racial lid on in the first primary let it blow off in the runoff.

THE second dramatic shift, which has been generally overlooked, came in the cities. Here Graham actually increased his overwhelming pluralities among the Negroes. He suffered a further falling off in the labor vote, but not of decisive proportions. The big "break" against him came in the economically conservative middle class. In Asheville, for example, all four precincts that Dewey won in 1948 had gone for Graham in the first primary. All four swung against Graham in the runoff.

Another of the pro-Dewey precincts that had favored Graham in May but turned away in June was Box 13 in Greensboro. Flanking the Women's College of North Carolina, it is a semi-suburban residential area, with homes ranging in value between $8,000 and $25,000. After the first primary I found this precinct strongly opposed to Truman and the Fair Deal. All whom I interviewed were ready to vote for Eisenhower on a Republican ticket in 1952. Their support of Graham was not for his economic views, but as a personal tribute to his reputation as the South's most progressive educator. The Graham workers in the Box 13 precinct actually went at it harder in the runoff than in the primary. But, as two of them, Professor John Bridger and his wife, told me, they found it more difficult now to talk politics. The intensity of the campaigning seemed to make many people irritable, and reluctant to come out and vote.

What shifted this precinct was a middle-class uneasiness over Graham's economic philosophy plus the insistent drumming on the fear that white and Negro children might have to attend the same schools. FEPC as an issue had not roused strong racial feelings in the middle class, which would not be directly affected by Fair Employment legislation. But the Supreme Court's ruling in the Texas and Oklahoma cases, threatening the eventual end of segregation in all schools, shocked them.

One worker for Willis Smith had written an eloquent campaign letter picturing the threat to family security in inflationary policies which, she alleged, robbed savings of their value and taxed away so much of one's earnings. She showed the letter to the wife of a doctor, who had campaigned for Graham in the first primary. The doctor's wife read it and exclaimed, "That's a fine letter! It

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expresses my sentiments exactly." Then she added, "You know I don't want my daughter to go to school with Negroes."

That the racial emotions of "poor whites" in the South are readily inflamed has always been known. The "surprise" in Graham's defeat was the revelation that the cry of "nigger" could inflame even the well-educated, well-to-do middle class. No longer will it suffice to attribute race prejudice in the South merely to poverty and inadequate education. Frank Graham was defeated not by a foul-mouthed Theodore Bilbo but by a nationally honored lawyer who was chairman of the board of trustees of Duke University. It was not only the "bigots" who turned against "Doctor Frank."

In Charlotte, Graham's worst showing came in Myers Park, which is the city's most fashionable residential area, with its own little theater and art and nature museum. Charlotte's low vote for Graham probably reflected less racial feeling than economic opinion. The prosperous trading center of the Piedmont Carolinas, containing more than 400 branches of national concerns, Charlotte is easily the most business-minded community in North Carolina. In 1948 both daily newspapers supported Dewey, who got 34 per cent of the vote to 44 per cent for Truman, with 21 per cent going to the Dixiecrats.

In every North Carolina city, the vote against Graham mirrored the Republican-Dixiecrat voting of 1948—so much so that the Graham battle was clearly a continuation of the 1948 struggle and a testing for 1952. In Wilmington, for example, there were two precincts which Dewey had won, and eleven more in which the Dixiecrat-Republican vote had exceeded Truman's. Graham lost all thirteen. Again, in Guilford County, which includes Greensboro and High Point, Graham lost seventeen precincts, all but four of which had gone for Dewey in 1948. In two of these four, Truman's vote had lagged behind the combined Republican-Dixiecrat vote, and only in the other two had he won a clear majority.

The parallel with 1948 emerges even more sharply when one studies the defeat of Claude Pepper in Florida by Senator George A. Smathers. All ten Florida counties that Dewey had won were swept by Smathers, as were the twelve precincts Dewey had carried in Jacksonville, all fourteen Dewey precincts in Tampa, and all but two of the twenty-two Dewey precincts in Miami. The exceptions were in Miami Beach, where Jewish neighborhoods had voted against Truman but favored Pepper. In Duval County (Jacksonville), Smathers had a 9,500 plurality. The twelve Dewey precincts alone supplied 8,300 of that lead.

In another thirty-eight precincts in Miami, Tampa, and Jacksonville, the combined Republican-Dixiecrat vote had exceeded Truman's. Smathers took all but three of these precincts. He also swept the three counties won by Thurmond in 1948. How much of an "upset" was Pepper's defeat, considering that Truman would have lost Florida—and Tennessee and Virginia too—had the Republicans and Dixiecrats united against him?

In their campaigning neither Willis Smith nor Smathers talked openly of coalition with the Republicans; but a precinct-by-precinct breakdown of their vote makes clear that their campaigns did in fact bring about a merger of the Republican and Dixiecrat vote. "Race" alone did not effect this merger. Packaged in with the racial issue was opposition to a number of other things—to Communism, the CIO, government spending, health insurance, and "the drift towards socialism." *What the "racial" issue did was disintegrate the economic following upon which the liberals relied, while solidifying the economic following of the conservatives.*

The emergence of this Dixiecrat-Republican voting coalition in the 1950 primaries must seem a particularly ironic development to Southern liberals, considering how high were their hopes only a few years ago. In 1944, when the Supreme Court opened the white primaries to Negroes, Southern liberals rejoiced in the belief that the means were at

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last in sight for their winning control of the Democratic party. These hopes were fanned in 1946 when the CIO launched its drive for a million new members in the South.

By 1950, however, the South's largest union, the Textile Workers of America, was actually weaker than in 1946. This failure of labor's Southern organizing drive is usually blamed by labor leaders on the Taft-Hartley law. But the election returns indicate that a more basic miscalculation was involved. The spread of new factories in the South has not produced an awakened, militant labor movement, as the labor leaders expected. Instead, the first fruits of increasing industrialism have been the rise of a new urban middle class that is virtually Republican in its sympathies. Since 1940 the Republican presidential vote in the South has increased by 50 per cent. By far the heaviest gains have come in the most urbanized states—Texas, Florida, Virginia, and North Carolina—and in the cities of those states. Roanoke, Staunton, and Winchester in Virginia went Republican in 1948, while Alexandria, Fredericksburg, and Charlottesville almost did. The Republican tally in Houston and Dallas has more than doubled since 1940. In short, virtually everywhere that new industry has spread in the South, the prestige of business has been enhanced and new support has been won for the political attitudes generally attributed to business.

The dramatic advances made by Negroes in the South in recent years have had a similar conservative political effect. The fact that Negroes have begun to vote in the South in appreciable numbers marks a notable advance. Still, both the Graham and Pepper defeats could be attributed largely to heavy Negro voting that brought on an even heavier anti-Negro outpouring. In Florida during the 1950 primary battle, 31,000 new Negro voters registered, largely as a result of a registration drive organized by the CIO. The anti-Pepper forces, however, used this registration drive as evidence of a plot to overthrow white supremacy. As a result, 89,000 new white voters registered.

Similarly, the opening of the universities of Texas and Oklahoma to Negroes was a stirring victory for them, but, as we have seen, it probably cost Graham his seat in the United States Senate.

Politics in the South, as in other parts of the country, is marked by innumerable conflicting cross-currents. Yet what has been happening there since the war's end can perhaps be summarized by picturing the South as the arena of two major political battles—the struggle of the Northern Negro to liberalize the status of his Southern cousins against the opposition of the Southern delegation in Congress; and a contest between Northern industry and Northern labor to extend their respective influences southward.

Economically, Northern industry has clearly won. Racially, the Negro has won new rights through the Supreme Court, but it has been at the expense of solidifying white voters against further racial reform and the threatened end of legal segregation.

The hope that the economic and social changes remaking the South would produce a liberal coalition drawing its strength from labor and the new Negro voters has all but vanished. The dominant coalition which has emerged in the South has been that of a rapidly expanding urban middle class united with all those who, for whatever reason, fear the liberalization of the Negro's status.

For liberals there is one possible consolation in this situation. Both the urban middle class, which has been tending to vote for Republican presidents, and the Southerners who are up in arms against civil rights, are growing increasingly restive within the one-party system. To make their views felt nationally, both these elements are being driven to bolt the Democratic party and ally themselves with the Northern Republicans. Thus, although liberals in the South are everywhere in retreat, the defeats they are suffering could prepare the way for the birth of a genuine two-party politics in Dixie.

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WHAT "THE SONG OF SONGS" MEANS

"The Time of Singing Is Come. . . ."

THEODOR H. GASTER

IT IS a traditional Jewish custom to read the Song of Songs on the Sabbath of the Passover festival, and every year, when the custom is dutifully observed, a number of attendant questions rise like ghosts from unquiet graves. For the Song of Songs is the riddle of riddles; of all the books of the Bible none has provoked so much discussion or been subjected to so many different interpretations.

The literal content of the Song is, to be sure, clear and intelligible enough: from beginning to end it is a sensuous and lyrical expression of human love. Everything else about it, however, invites question and inspires speculation. Who really wrote the book, and when? What is its true significance? Is it a single song or a collection of songs? How did it come to be included in a body of sacred scripture? To these questions various answers have been given, and when they are put side by side, they present a striking and illuminating picture of the shifting trends and fashions which have informed literary criticism in general and the study of the Bible in particular during the course of the ages. Even today, after centuries of continuous study and research, no definitive solution to the riddle has been found . . . and none will be here attempted. As the philosopher Saadia said so long ago, the Song of Songs is a lock to which we as yet have no key. Nevertheless, it may be interesting to know what *has* thus far been accomplished; and certainly the story is not without fascination as a record of human ingenuity on the one hand and of human obtuseness on the other.

For many centuries, the question that most profoundly agitated readers of the Song was how it ever got into the Bible. The question was born of the feeling that the Bible was the Word of God in the sense of being a transcendental revelation of His purpose and of the laws which should govern man's subservience to it; with this, the Song's celebration of earthly and carnal love seemed grossly inconsistent. Moreover, in ages more genteel and less frank than our own, to take the Song in its plain literal meaning was held to imply an unthinkable abrogation of "good taste" and of all the manners and conventions of polite society. In the words of a 19th-century divine (shocked beyond measure by the feminine demand for kisses in the very first verse): "No man in his senses would think to compliment his fair one by writing to her as if she had lost her retiring modesty, her female dignity, and degraded herself by doing that for which every man would despise her."

The dilemma was very simply resolved: the rabbis interpreted the Song allegorically! No earthly love of man and woman was it that formed its central theme, but the mystic passion of a Divine Lover for His beloved people. The maiden who says "I sleep, but

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THIS month, as on every Passover, the beautiful —and more than a little problematical—verses of the Song of Songs will be chanted in the synagogue. Tradition ascribes these songs to Solomon, as it does the Psalms to David. Modern scholarship, on the other hand, has contrived all sorts of ingenious theories to explain the text of the Song. A critical summary of these theories is here presented by THEODOR H. GASTER, whose articles on Jewish holidays and Jewish institutions are well known to our readers. His most recent essay, "The Passing of the Batlan," appeared in the February 1952 issue. For the convenience of the reader—as well as for his pleasure—the text of the Song of Songs, to which Mr. Gaster makes frequent reference, is reprinted in the "Cedars of Lebanon," our department devoted each month to some classic of Jewish thought or culture.

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my heart waketh," was the maiden Israel, and the lover who knocked on the door but was denied admission was the Holy One, blessed be He. The lips of the beloved which were "like a thread of scarlet" were those of the high priest pronouncing the Ineffable Name on the Day of Atonement and thereby causing the scarlet sins of Israel to become white as snow. The "heap of lilies" which encircled her waist were the Seventy Elders to whom the Law had been transmitted; and it was through the sin of the Golden Calf that her features had become "black but comely." Every verse of the Song was interpreted in symbolic and homiletic fashion, and (with a little dexterity) almost every verse lent itself readily to such treatment; even the breasts of the beloved, "which are like twin fawns," were promptly identified as Moses and Aaron.

This allegorical interpretation runs like a silver thread from the 6th-century Aramaic paraphrase (Targum) of the Song down through all subsequent Jewish thought and literature. Israel is always the "lily of the valleys" or "my dove, my undefiled," and God is always the ardent suitor courting her favors; in the words of a familiar High Holy Day hymn:

Thy belovèd, Lord, are we;
Thou our Lover e'er shalt be.

THERE were, of course, endless variations on the theme. To the Jewish philosophers of the 13th century, for instance, the lover was the active, and the beloved the receptive intellect; while a hundred years later, Isaac Sahula contended that the former represented the body, and the latter the soul.

Christianity, too, had its own way of interpreting the Song allegorically. To Church fathers like Hippolytus, Origen, and Jerome, what it really expressed was the love of Christ for the Church—an interpretation echoed in the quaint chapter headings* of the King James Bible (Chap. I: "The Church's Love and Confession. She Is Directed to the Shepherds' Tents. Congratulations") and also of the earlier German version of Martin Luther. Fantasy played its part: the palanquin of King Solomon (3:9) became the Cross; its silver legs were the thirty pieces of silver for which Judas had betrayed his Lord; the purple cushions were the purple robes in which the suffering Savior had been clothed; and the crown (3:11) was the crown of thorns. There were endless variations on the theme. According to Gregory of Nyssa (331-396), for example, the heroine of the poem was not the Church but the individual soul; while in the 17th century a learned ecclesiastic compiled a fair-sized treatise on the different types of kisses which the Divine Lover might be expected to bestow (symbolically, of course) upon the object of His affections.

It is easy to smile at all this and to dismiss it as the product of an unenlightened, "prescientific" age. The fact is, however, that the aim of the ancient interpreters was entirely different from that of the modern Bible scholar, so that their efforts cannot fairly be put on the same plane. For while the latter focuses his attention upon the original sense of the text, what interested the former, and what he was trying to recover, was its ultimate significance—a significance which issues just as much out of the perceptions and associations of successive readers as out of the primary concept and intent of the author. Behind their extravagances and excesses, therefore, there lay, in fact, the intuitive apprehension of a sound aesthetic principle—the principle that meaning is dynamic rather than static, depending on *im*pression as well as *ex*pression, and that art has a flower as well as a seed. Because they introduced this vital truth (albeit by implication only) into the domain of Biblical study they deserve something better than supercilious scorn.

BE THIS as it may, the status of the Song of Songs as a divine text, which so perplexed our ancestors, is today, to all intents and purposes, a thing of the past. The rediscovery of Ancient Near Eastern literature,

* These intriguing comments are generally omitted from modern reprints, especially from American editions, and it is significant that the compilers of the Revised Version (1885) made a special point of discarding them.

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on the one hand, and the progress of theology on the other, have given us a better understanding of both the nature of the Biblical writings and the process of divine revelation, so that what seemed to previous generations so anomalous and incongruous no longer appears so to us. The modern reader of the Song of Songs is concerned far more with its character as a literary document than its sanctity or presence in the Scriptures.

Concerning this character there are four principal theories, which may be called, for brevity: (a) the dramatic; (b) the repertorial; (c) the nuptial; and (d) the cultic.

The dramatic theory was first suggested, in its current form, towards the beginning of the 18th century. True enough, Origen had already pointed out, some fourteen hundred years earlier, that the Song had the structure of a dramatic dialogue, and the allegorical interpreters indeed recognized this fact; but dramatic dialogue is something different from a full-fledged play, and what was now suggested was that the poem was really of the latter character.

The plot was simple enough: a maiden from the village of Shunem (i.e., the Shulammite of 7:1) had been abducted by the officers of King Solomon and carried off to his harem in Jerusalem (1:4; 3:6-11). There, however, she had remained faithful to her shepherd lover, who came "skipping upon the hills" and "peering through the lattice" (2:8-9) in order to sing duets with her. During the intervals between these clandestine visits, the hapless maiden had spent her time addressing her fellow inmates of the harem and exhorting them not to "stir up love until it please" (2:7; 3:5; 8:4). The latter served, in fact, as a kind of Greek chorus, and several of the passages commending the young lady's beauty—notably that which entreats her to "return, return, that we may look upon thee" (7:1)—were really chanted by them. The upshot of the drama, deduced from its concluding verses (8:11-14), in which the maiden seemingly rejects the advances of the king and bids her lover "flee . . . upon the mountains of spices," was taken to be that the royal ogre was thwarted, or magnanimously gave up, while pure love emerged triumphant.

This, to be sure, is a picture which might delight the heart of an impresario; and in one or other form it has claimed the support of several eminent Bible scholars—among them the great Ernest Renan himself. Indeed, it has even been turned to homiletic purposes; the redoubtable Massoretic scholar, the late C. D. Ginsburg (who, according to A. H. Sayce's gossipy *Reminiscences*, was none too courteous towards his own third wife), stoutly maintained that the inspired aim of the drama was to extol the virtue and modesty of women and to serve as a rebuke to indifferent Oriental husbands who tended to treat them like doormats. Nevertheless, the whole theory encounters fatal objections and betrays, in disquieting fashion, the gross ignorance which so often besets Bible scholars when they venture into the wider realm of literary history and criticism.

The fact is that drama, in the ancient world, was a precise and fairly rigid literary form. Its structure had been determined, in the remote past, by the fact that it had originated as an accompaniment to ritual ceremonies, the content and sequence of its acts and scenes corresponding, more or less, to that of the component elements of a religious procedure. There was always an initial prologue, spoken by a precentor or a chorus; this reflected the preliminary summons to assembly and worship. Then there was a struggle, either physical or verbal, between two antagonists; this reflected the combat between Life and Death, Summer and Winter, Old Year and New Year, which formed a cardinal element of primitive seasonal rites. Lastly, there was a moralizing epilogue. Interspersed in the action were choral chants—originally hymns sung during the presentation of offerings. To be sure, this primitive structure came in time to be modified or adapted to suit artistic rather than purely ritual requirements, but its essential features always remained, and modern scholars have had little difficulty in pointing them out both in classical Greek tragedy and comedy and even in

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the conventions of the contemporary theater and in folk plays and similar popular productions. Now, there is absolutely nothing of this formal structure in the Song of Songs, so that when modern scholars call it a drama, all that their words can legitimately mean is that they would recognize in it a certain sequence of action conveyed by dialogue. But such a literary genre—really that of the masque rather than of the drama—is not elsewhere attested in the ancient world—at least, not in the Ancient Near East.

Nor is this the only difficulty. Another is even more practical: to construe the poem as a drama involves making some of the scenes consist only of a single verse, and it takes no Shakespeare to realize that this would be utterly ludicrous. Furthermore—as Graetz acutely observed—in 2:10 the utterance of the lover is in fact reported by the maiden ("My beloved spoke and said unto me. . . ."), and this destroys the assumption of dialogue which is essential to the dramatic theory.

THE repertorial theory, which today commands the largest degree of assent among scholars, was an offshoot of the romantic revival in the 18th and 19th centuries. As part of that movement, there grew up in Europe a fervent interest in popular traditions and songs. In England, this found expression, in 1765, in the publication of Bishop Percy's famous *Reliques,* containing specimens of traditional ballads and lyrics current in the British Isles; while twelve years later, in his *Stimmen der Voelker in Liedern,* the German poet Herder insisted that such ruder material ought properly to be considered, alongside of more formal literary productions, as one of the major expressions of a people's distinctive culture and genius. The enthusiasm of the pioneers soon found a ready following, and within the next fifty years collections of popular songs began to appear in almost every European country. In France, Villemarqué published his famous corpus of Breton verse; in Germany, Musaeus did likewise for the folk songs of his own people; in Spain there was Milà y Fontanis; in Portugal, Armeida Garret; and in Italy, Tommaseo gave to the world his immortal collections. In Greece, the movement for independence and the resurgence of national consciousness led the poet-patriot Rangabé to a similar activity.

The rediscovery of this neglected branch of literature left its mark on the interpretation of the Song of Songs. Originally it was not the Bible scholars but the Romanticists who forged the link; in 1764, Bishop Percy himself suggested that the Biblical poem was really a popular wedding song, or epithalamium, while twenty-two years later Herder claimed that it was a repertoire of popular love songs. Biblical scholars then began to follow suit, and in recent years this view has received some degree of confirmation from the discovery of amazingly close parallels to the supposed genre in the literature of Ancient Egypt on the one hand and in the folklore of the modern Bedouins of Palestine on the other. It has been pointed out also that the very title of the book may really mean "a song composed of songs," rather than "the most excellent of songs," as has hitherto been supposed. Moreover, to the contention that certain verses in fact recur and therefore suggest that the Song must be a unity with a recurrent refrain, it has been pertinently objected that it is characteristic of all popular poetry everywhere to adopt and incorporate certain standard catch-lines, like the "hey nonny nonny" or the "fal-lal-la" of Elizabethan lyrics.

BY THE middle of the 19th century the scientific study of folklore had been successfully launched. The new science, however, extended its range beyond mere popular literature and reached out more and more into the domain of custom and practice, finally developing the sister disciplines of ethnography and sociology and itself becoming a branch of cultural anthropology. Missionaries and consular officials now began to study and report the usages of the peoples in whose midst they were posted. In 1861, one of the more enlightened of these officers, a certain J. G. Wetzstein, stationed as German consul at Damascus, happened to observe

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that in several Syrian villages it was the custom to celebrate weddings for seven days, during which time the bride and groom were enthroned as king and queen upon a corn-drag, while their "subjects" danced before them and extolled their bodily beauty in a series of sensuous chants known as *wasfs*. Moreover, on the eve of the actual wedding ceremony, the bride and groom displayed their attractions both to one another and to the assembled company by going through the motions of a sword-dance called *sakh*.

Several years after Wetzstein had published his account of these festivities, the celebrated German Bible scholar Karl Budde suggested that this pattern of ceremonies might really underlie the Song of Songs, and thus was born what we have termed the nuptial theory. On this view, the several references to King Solomon would be semi-humorous allusions to the bridegroom; while the passage (3:6-11) describing his arrival in his palanquin, crowned as "in the day of his espousals" and surrounded by "threescore mighty men," would refer to his enthronement on the corn-drag, accompanied by the groomsmen, or attendants. The exuberant enumerations of bodily beauties would be the *wasfs*, and the exclamation (7:1): "What will ye see in the Shulammite? As it were, a dance of two companions [*mahanaim*]" would allude to the bridal sword-dance, more especially since the Hebrew word *mahanaim* could also mean "military camps."

This theory, too, has commanded its due measure of support, but it encounters formidable objections. First, there is no evidence whatsoever that the modern Syrian ceremonies ever existed in ancient times. Second, every one of the alleged correspondences breaks down on closer scrutiny. Thus, in the passage which has been taken to describe the bridal dance, it is said distinctly of the maiden, "How beautiful are thy steps in sandals," but the fact is that the Syrian sword-dance is performed barefoot. Again, the identification of King Solomon's palanquin with the corn-drag "throne" overlooks the fact that the former is something in which the king sits alone and in which he is conveyed to the scene, whereas the latter is something on which the bridal couple sit together from the very beginning of the proceedings. Lastly, it is significant that the Song expressly describes King Solomon as wearing a crown on the day of his espousals, whereas in the Syrian ceremonies it is the bride alone, and never the bridegroom, who is thus adorned.

THE cultic theory is of more recent vintage. At the beginning of the present century, as scholars became more and more acquainted with the literature and culture of the Ancient Near East, they also came to realize more clearly that, side by side with the Israelite religion of Jehovah, there must have existed in ancient Palestine a goodly residue of the older pagan cults, and that traces of these, surviving now as pure folklore and now in sublimated, transmogrified form, might indeed be detected in the pages of the Bible. Now, a prominent cult in the Ancient Near East was that of the divine lovers Ishtar and Tammuz or—in their Syrian form—Astarte (Venus) and Adonis. Ritual chants belonging to this cult and dating to the 2nd millennium B.C.E. had actually come to light as the result of excavations in Mesopotamia. It was now suggested, therefore, that the Song of Songs might really be a Hebrew version of such chants, thinly disguised so as to render it seemingly innocuous.

The theory was based on the supposition that definite allusions to the characteristic features of the cult might be recognized in the Biblical poem. It was pointed out, for example, that the Hebrew word *dod*, the regular term for the lover in the Song, might be equated with the Babylonian Dudu, allegedly a title of Tammuz. Similarly, the famous words "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it" (8:7) might now be taken to refer to the swirling torrents of the netherworld which Ishtar allegedly crossed in order to retrieve her lover from the world of the dead. Finally, it was claimed, with not a little ingenuity, that the Jewish custom of reading the Song on Passover might be a dim survival of its original recitation at the pagan springtime festival.

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The answer to all this is, however, very simple: while Ishtar and Tammuz were lovers, not all lovers are Ishtar and Tammuz. An erotic cult will naturally use the language of ordinary erotic experience, but that does not mean that any normal employment of it must necessarily be referred to a ritual origin. Are the sonnets of Shakespeare likewise relics of the Ishtar cult?

Nor, indeed, are the particular arguments any too convincing. It is quite true that Dudu occurs in Assyro-Babylonian literature as the name of a god, but there is no proof that it has anything to do with the Hebrew word for "lover," nor that it was sufficiently prominent a name in the cult of Ishtar and Tammuz for it to have been taken over when that cult passed to Syria and Palestine. Similarly, the attempt to find in the "many waters" and "the floods" of 8:7 a reference to the perilous river of the netherworld overlooks the immediately preceding verse, where love is described as a vehement "flame." Lastly, the custom of reading the Song on Passover cannot be traced beyond the Gaonic age, which began in the 6th century C.E., and it was conditioned solely by the allegorical interpretation which saw in the text references to the deliverance from Egypt.

BESIDES the question of its character, the problem which continues to exercise modern readers of the Song is that of its authorship and date.

The traditional view, embodied in the very title, is that it was composed by Solomon, in which case it would date about 1000 B.C.E. This view is based mainly on the fact that Solomon is mentioned in the text and that he is said elsewhere in the Bible (I Kings 5:12) to have written more than a thousand songs. Modern scholars are generally agreed, however, that the traditional ascription cannot be taken seriously, but is simply another instance of the tendency (evidenced also in the books of Psalms and Proverbs) of ascribing anonymous works of literature to well-known historical or legendary figures. The language of the book, it is pointed out, contains a number of telltale foreign words—like *pardes*, "paradise, garden," or *appiryon* (Greek *phoreion*), "litter, palanquin," which could scarcely have become current in Hebrew until the Persian or Greek periods of Jewish history. Moreover, there are certain grammatical forms and constructions which betray the influence of Aramaic, and this has suggested that the Song must have been written in that later, post-Exilic age when Aramaic came largely to replace Hebrew as the vernacular of the Jews. For these reasons, the majority of modern scholars would date the book to about the 3rd century B.C.E. (It must be borne in mind, however, that traditional songs always show a tendency to modernize archaic forms and expressions, so that this evidence is by no means so conclusive for a late date as might appear at first blush.)

The historian Graetz (who always claimed that his *History of the Jewish People* was but of secondary importance beside his Biblical studies) went even further. Developing a line of inquiry previously initiated by others, he contended that one could actually find in the Song traces of its author's indebtedness to Theocritus, the Greek idyllist who flourished at Alexandria during the early part of the 3rd century B.C.E. In that case, of course, it could not be earlier than the Maccabean age and would reflect that blending of Hebraism and Hellenism which was the dominant characteristic of the period. When, however, one begins to examine these alleged similarities more closely, all of them are either too general to be significant or else they are no valid comparisons at all. In 1:9, for example, the lover thus addresses his beloved: "I have compared thee, O my love, to [my] steed in Pharaoh's chariots. Thy cheeks are comely with circlets, thy neck with beads." With these words Graetz compares a passage of Theocritus in which it is said of Helen of Troy: "Such glory Helen unto Sparta gave / As gives a cypress to a garden-close / Or to a chariot a Thessalian mare."

It is quite plain, however, that these two similes are really on entirely different levels. What the lover in the Song is saying (some-

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what grotesquely, to be sure) is that when he beholds his beloved decked out in all her beads and necklaces, it seems to him as though his own humble but favorite steed had been suddenly caparisoned for a royal chariot. What Theocritus is saying, on the other hand, is that Helen stood out among the women of Sparta even as a giant cypress stands out among all the other trees in a garden or as a Thessalian thoroughbred stands out among other horses in a team. Nor, again, is anyone likely to be convinced by Graetz's contention that when the author of the Song makes his heroine declare: ". . . I am swarthy . . . the sun hath . . . tanned me" (1:6), he is consciously or even unconsciously stealing from Theocritus' description of a Syrian girl as "sunburnt," or that the words, "honey and milk are under thy tongue" (4:11) are necessarily inspired by Theocritus' phrase: "than honey is thy voice more sweet." Do we not ourselves sometimes describe a voice as mellifluous? Indeed, the very fact that many of the most striking expressions of the Song can be paralleled with equal ease from Ancient Egyptian, ancient and modern Arabic, and Greek and English love songs, shows in itself how universal they are and how futile it is to assume specific "indebtedness."

FINALLY, it may be of interest to mention some of the instances in which modern research has given new and unexpected meanings to familiar phrases of the Song or proved them to be but mistranslations.

A case in point is the famous passage (1:5) where the maiden declares that she is ". . . black but comely . . . as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon." For centuries, "the curtains of Solomon" was thought to allude to the rich dark-dyed drapes of the royal mansion. Now, however, we know that the reference to Solomon is due only to a wrong vocalization of the consonantal Hebrew text, which really spoke not of *SHeLoMoH* but of *SHaLMaH,* a Bedouin tribe, like Kedar, mentioned in Assyrian and South Arabian sources.

Similarly, the famous reference to "the Shulammite" in 7:1 has recently received quite unexpected elucidation. In the past, this was taken to be the name of the beloved, and it was variously (and wondrously) explained. According to some scholars, it was simply a concocted feminine counterpart of Solomon, with the connotation of "Solomon's lady." Others saw in it a dialectal pronunciation of the word Shunammite, the allusion being to Abishag, the Shunammite beauty (I Kings 1:3) with whom the beloved was, presumably, compared. Now, however, we know that the name refers to an ancient Canaanite goddess named Shulmanitu who was sometimes considered as the patroness of war. Thus the point of the verse becomes clear: as the maiden twirls in the dance, the onlookers liken her to the majestic goddess executing her war dance.

But perhaps the most striking example of modern exegetical ingenuity is the new meaning which has been given to that oft-quoted verse (8:6): "Set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine arm." The traditional explanation of these words is that their imagery is drawn either from the practice of stamping property in token of ownership or else from that of carrying seals in lockets suspended over the breast or as bracelets on the arm. Professor A. Kaminka, however, has proposed an arresting alternative. The image, he says, is drawn rather from the practice of affixing a seal to the end of a document as a symbol of finality, so that the meaning is: Let me be the last to be loved by your heart or embraced by your arms!

THE modern reader of the Song of Songs should not be unduly dismayed by the diversity of views which have been expressed about it. As the Bible puts it, the light grows brighter and brighter until the perfect day. After more than two thousand years of study, we may come back indeed to the wisdom of the ancient sage who said of the volume of Scripture: "Turn it and turn it again, for everything is in it." Yet, even as we wait for the dawn, we may—in the words of the Song itself, go "down . . . to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies."

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THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CHINA DECISIONS

The Shifting Line of American Group Mentality

HERRYMON MAURER

MICE, as every enlightened American knows, are regularly pregnant with mountains. Since the fall of Chinese civilization before the onrush of Communism—a matter which involves four thousand years of time and almost half a billion people—is a massive and complex event, it follows, by all the laws of common opinion, that it must have a simple cause. Since the United States was in singularly intimate contact with China immediately before that country's transformation into a Stalinist state, it follows, accordingly, that the responsible mice must have been Americans. And since it is now plain that the Chinese mountain has turned out to be a volcano, how should Americans, always anxious to pin responsibility, suspect that the primal causes are anything other than certain mice hidden Hiss-like in the Washington hay? Some point at administration mice generally, others single out certain ones in particular, and denounce them as the sole villains behind the present volcanic eruption.

This is not to say that the United States did not have a measure of responsibility for what happened in China, or that the highly placed Americans who initialed the several China decisions are not to be debited with errors of knowledge and heart, any more than they are to be deprived of credit for wisdom and sense in other policy decisions. But, having said this, one must also say that the present debate over past China policy is by and large obscurantist. This is so even if we leave aside the Communist accusation, on the one extreme, that the United States government, under the domination of Wall Street and the NAM, used money and force to support a tottering, reactionary, feudal regime; or the comparably vociferous charge, on the other extreme, that the United States government plotted on behalf of world Communism. The MacArthur hearings, the investigations of the Institute of Pacific Relations, and the quarrel over Philip Jessup's fitness for public office have not so much elicited new facts as compounded old confusions. They have led to wordy disputation over matters not of central relevance, at the expense of key questions.

There has been much talk, for instance, of the degree of truculence MacArthur should have shown to the Chinese Communists, but there has been very little talk as to how American economic and military assistance should have been apportioned between Western Europe and Eastern Asia—or for that matter should now be. There have been occasional denunciations of Britain's trade with Red China via Hong Kong, but there have been few discussions of her virtual withdrawal from Far Eastern affairs. There has been more argument over who in the administration supported recognition of the Chinese Communists after they came to power than there has been over who in public life approved of Chinese Communism at an earlier time, when such approval had a concrete historical effect. And when this last issue is raised at all, it is raised not in terms of who was confused, stupid, or green in his opinions, but in terms of who was Russian in his political allegiance. The question as to who is a Communist is of vital importance to the personnel branches of our government, but exclusive consideration of

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WE PRESENT in this issue two articles on U.S. foreign policy, the first by HERRYMON MAURER, focusing on the China problem, the second an analysis of the approach prescribed by George Kennan for the task of dealing with Soviet aggression. Both present some very pertinent facts and analyses, which, we predict, readers will find both perceptive and provocative. Mr. Maurer is the author of *Collision of East and West* (1951) and other books on the East, a subject to which he brings fifteen years of experience, much of it first-hand. For five years an editor of *Fortune*, he has been for the past five years a contributor to that magazine. He has served also as publications adviser and lecturer at Pendle Hill, the Quaker study center. He was born in Sewickley, Pennsylvania, in 1914.

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the question as to who had a party card, or was a Red Army spy, has let a great many people unjustifiably off the hook of responsibility for the China decision.

It is evident of course, that, while the fall of China was hardly the work of a bunch of party-liners in Washington back rooms, there have been some party-liners and some back rooms. It is also evident that the State Department has been at pains to identify a large body of State Department "data" on China with the inevitable course of history, and has given occasional and uneasy indications of trying to hide some sort of corpse. I am persuaded, however, that the discussion of such matters should now be made subordinate to the weighing of issues of larger moment, as for instance, policy toward China *now* or—even more important—United States foreign policy in general, its premises, its aims, its intellectual foundations. Here the question of responsibility for the China decision is highly pertinent, but it will be answered, I believe, only if an effort is made, first, to re-create the mental atmosphere in which the decision was reached and to see what correspondence existed between that mentality and the actual historical facts; and, second, to consider what in the world, or out of it, brought such a mentality into existence.

In attempting this, I would suggest that the "verdicts of history" be forgotten. Such verdicts are usually so separated in time from the evidence as to permit, if not encourage, lies and myths. What would obviously be profitable is a coherent narrative in which all pertinent events would be fitted into their actual setting without recourse to the shoehorn of hindsight. By that same token, it is not irrelevant to the present to suggest a few of the anterior relations between minds and events that impressed themselves at the time they happened upon one observer as he watched the encounter of China and the United States during the past fifteen years.

II

It is beyond question that, in the course of the decade preceding the China debacle, the American government moved toward the encouragement of a coalition between the Chinese government and the Communist party of China, and that it did not discourage at least a degree of Russian Communist influence in Manchuria. It is also beyond question that there was a singular unanimity of opinion in regard to this policy among journalists, students of international affairs, specialists on the Far East, writers of war books and readers of them, missionaries, elders in the Republican party, New Dealers, and conservative Democrats, and that this opinion was so close to that of Americans officially at work in Chungking and in Washington as to pose the question of whether the State Department was making policy or merely following the prevailing winds of supposed enlightened opinion.

A few individuals, a few officials, several Congressmen, and several periodicals stood apart. (Oddly enough, the fact of their having been "prematurely" anti-Communist in Chinese affairs now marks them as objects of suspicion for otherwise intelligent people: how many liberals can bring themselves to forgive the *New Leader* for being right while the *New Republic* was being wrong about Mao Tse-tung?) These voices were, unhappily, far fewer than those encouraging the government to be more openly favorable to the Chinese Communists. There was widespread talk, for instance, that the Communist regime ought to be recognized, and recognition withdrawn from Chiang—and this talk was not even an echo of the Communist line at the time, which confined itself to the popular proposal of arming the Chinese Communists. In some quarters, it was felt so proper to speak freely about an entente with Russia over China that President Roosevelt was even quoted on the concessions he was willing to make to Stalin at the forthcoming Yalta conference.

Whatever is to be said about the secret agreements at Yalta or about American flirtation with Chinese Communism—in my view then, as now, both were unfortunate—it must be said that the agreements and the flirtation were supported almost unanimously by educated American opinion at the time they were being planned. What to do with the King of Italy was a topic that provoked more variety of opinion than the question of what to do with the vast, remote country of China.

If the first conclusion to be drawn about United States policy toward China is that almost everybody held the same attitudes at the same time, the second conclusion is that

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almost everybody showed the capacity to change his conclusions simultaneously. Attitudes toward Chiang Kai-shek, for example, underwent a sudden switch-around in the space of about two years. At the end of 1941, Chiang was considered by most interested Americans to be a remarkable statesman, an astute strategist, a wise administrator, a reformer, and a Christian gentleman. His country was prayed for in churches and aided by way of United China Relief; for some years China figured as World War II's poor little Belgium. Only two years later, at the beginning of 1944, Chiang was considered by the same Americans to be a reactionary politician, an incompetent military man, a fumbling leader, a feudalist, and a Confucianist. Opinions concerning the government of which he was head underwent a similar shift. What had been valiant became venal; what had been courageous, corrupt; what had been reformist, reactionary.

Later on, the Americans who had unitedly changed their mind about Chiang began a similar revision in their views of the Chinese Communist party. These revisionists included men within the State Department (which in its official voice forever reminds one of Shaw's Major Sergius, who folds his arms and proclaims, "I never retract"), professors, newsmen, and citizens who wrote and read books and reports. They retreated from blanket approval of Chinese Communism by way of a series of complicated mental maneuvers. Many citizens came all at once to believe, for instance, that the now less-loved Communists would be certain to provoke Chinese xenophobia because of the aid got from Russia, while Americans would become beneficiaries of Chinese friendship because their government was no longer giving aid. Then there was wide agreement that, inasmuch as China had proved too great a problem for the United States, she would undoubtedly prove too great a problem for anyone else, including Russia, and that whoever tried to take her over would bog down. A little later, there was the argument that Chinese Communism was about to go Titoist. And finally, persons who had been enthusiasts for Mao Tse-tung began to insist publicly and privately that they had always worked against Communism in China, and that they had opposed Chiang Kai-shek with the particular purpose of strengthening China against it. At the same time, they began to mutter about a "China Lobby."

These shifts of opinion admit logically of three explanations. It can be argued—as I propose to—that opinion on the Far East moved with such uniformity because hardly anyone was in contact with the basic facts, and because almost everyone sought refuge in myths. Or it can be argued that it changed because the facts changed, and that everyone kept in step because everyone was indeed keeping in touch with events: namely, Chiang changing from statesman to feudalist, the Chinese Communists from reformers to international adventurers. Or it can be argued that facts, particularly those about China, are hidden things, and that the mass march of American opinion from one position to another resulted from the progressive unfolding of matters that were necessarily unknowable some years before.

THERE is no question, certainly, that China presented a remarkable multiplicity of facts, many of them seemingly inexplicable and many of them seemingly contradictory. Bizarre varieties of misinformation did indeed flourish among the best newspapermen, the best officials, and the best experts. The existence of misinformation does not, however, prove the non-existence of correct information. And it remains incontrovertible that a few Americans did have correct information—whence the animus that many liberals feel toward them; such men indicate that opinions on foreign policy can be based on a reasonable estimate of events instead of on a guess as to what the events will turn out to be; it is disheartening, after all, when one's opinion has been proved wrong, to be reminded that the right opinion was not just luck. The difficulty with persons who now argue "How could we have known?" is, of course, that they were at the time insisting somewhat stridently "We know."

The argument that the facts changed suffers from a similar difficulty: at the time when the facts were supposed to be changing no one came forward with any facts. Instead, quite suddenly Chiang was regarded as a fallen deity: "I have lost faith in the Generalissimo"; while to others he was an eternal rascal unmasked: "I always knew he was a bandit."

To find a historical basis for these abrupt

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shifts is indeed difficult. The formulation of China policy reflected, not a series of different facts, but a totality of shifting opinion. This opinion tended to fall somewhat neatly into quasi-Marxist clichés, largely, I imagine, because such pat formulas were at the time afloat pretty much everywhere in the sophisticated air. Stereotyped views have insidious appeal, particularly for people who have a nicely developed sense of order; myths are neatly conceptual, simple to handle. They encourage a cozy sense of mouselike fraternity; indeed they are the formulas forever favored by mice attempting to account for mountains.

III

But before concluding that the great body of informed Americans looked at China and saw myths of their own making, it is essential to study a series of what might charitably be called misconceptions, and to ask whether these misconceptions could conceivably have resulted from facts changed or facts concealed:

The basic economic and social problem in China was feudalism, and the basic need was division of the land. History refutes this. By the end of the 4th century B.C.E., Chinese farmers owned their land. During the following century feudalism was abolished. Before the beginning of the Common Era primogeniture had been done away with. It was all but impossible to build up either large landowning classes or hierarchic orders on the Japanese and European models. There were undoubtedly very sore spots in Chinese society, and it is unquestionable that social and political measures toward equality of any sort and all sorts had justification there, as in other countries. The fact remains, however, that concentration of landownership was less marked during the 20th century in China than in the United States. The best set of land statistics—available to anyone during the 40's—were collected between 1929 and 1933 by a University of Nanking survey under the directorship of John Lossing Buck, and these indicated that some 29 per cent of the arable land in China was rented as compared to a figure for the United States of 44 per cent. Two per cent of Chinese farmers turned out to be sharecroppers, as compared with 9 per cent of American farmers. Average rent from land did not exceed the interest given on deposits in modern Chinese banks. What was wrong with the cry for land reform was not simply that it echoed Communist propaganda, but particularly that it hid from view other reforms more urgently needed, as for instance, increased industrial production, improved use of the land, introduction of drought-and-disease-resistant seeds, equalization of taxes, development of credit cooperatives, and so on.

The Kuomintang was a monolithic organization almost entirely in the hands of reactionaries. It is undeniable that many Kuomintang members elevated their own interests above those of their country, that some of them engaged in gathering personal spoils, and that others tried to control the ideas of students and the writings of journalists. But it is also undeniable that no sort of totalitarian rule emerged from these activities. Except for its break with the Communists in 1927, the Kuomintang conducted no purges; rather it took into its membership nonpartisan and well-educated men; it embraced a variety of factions, some of them sharply critical of the party leadership; it even put a stop to the farming out of taxes, once a highly lucrative source of income for officials. Furthermore, it was never strong enough to control the Chinese political atmosphere, which had been relatively free for two thousand years of the autocracies that were supposedly governing it. At the very time when certain party leaders were trying to curb free speech, speeches were made in public and articles even appeared in newspapers against these attempts. Finally, the Kuomintang was the creator of whatever modern government existed in China, and it was the author of an organic law that provided not only for party power but also for the end of such power and for constitutional rule.

The Chinese government, incapable of wise rule, remained in power only through terror. There was indeed violence at the time of the 1927 split with the Communists and at the time of the Communist revolution after World War II. But the violence at the beginning and end of Central Government rule was not the stable pattern of government activity between these two events. That government, to be sure, never provided its citizens with civil safeguards of an American sort. But it committed sufficiently few out-

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rages upon them to be able to introduce paper currency all over China without force of arms. This feat spells unmistakable popular support for the government; for generations the Chinese had used copper and silver, and such paper currency as existed was a thing of the cities, seldom honored in the countryside. The government, moreover, was able to subdue most of the war lords—so numerous during the 20's and early 30's—and to render the rest impotent. Finally it was able to carry on a continuous war against Japan for eight years despite loss of communications, cities, and factories in the East. It is doubtful whether these military activities would have been possible without a considerable measure of confidence on the part of the Chinese people. It is obvious that the Central Government lost the confidence of large numbers of Chinese during the civil war, and that it lost the confidence of many Chinese intellectuals somewhat earlier. Here the important fact is that there was confidence to lose, not chains to be broken, and that during the critical war years, when American policy toward China was being framed, the confidence was there for the examination of any who troubled to look.

Chiang Kai-shek may once have been something of a statesman but he turned out to be a power-seeking old war lord. Chiang Kai-shek was the strong head of a government which had many of the weaknesses traditional with government in China. It was his task to manipulate men and events, to form coalitions and break them, to temporize when necessary, to strike hard when possible—all to the end of making China united and strong. This was his basic aim when Westerners were calling him a statesman; it was still his basic aim when they were calling him a war lord. The stubbornness that was one of his chief traits—and which ought by itself to have dispelled any notions of the alterability of his character—sprang essentially from his conviction that China should be accorded the rights of a great nation, a conviction he held so strongly that at times it took somewhat ritualistic forms. During the Sian kidnaping in 1936, Chiang's chief complaint was that he was not being treated in a manner befitting the head of a great state. In 1944 he objected to his treatment by General Joseph Stilwell in precisely the same terms. It is possible to argue that Chiang's character might have benefited from some kind of change, but it would be difficult to suggest just what sort of change *should* have taken place. It was his fixation on the unity of China and his ritualistic doggedness in trying to bring it about that gave China sufficient unity to resist Japanese invasion and sufficient dignity to turn down repeated and increasingly favorable Japanese peace offers. Inherent in his pursuit of this idea were his peremptoriness, his excessive meddling in small matters of administration, and his public exhortations on the value of Confucianist virtues and the wickedness of dissension and differences of opinion. Separate any one of these characteristics from Chiang's general make-up, and it becomes difficult to imagine the man capable of holding China together during two decades of international and civil war. Persons who do not warm to strong men and to nationalists may regret, as does this writer, that Chiang was unable to rise above the history of his times; but we cannot argue that he fell beneath it. He personified an urge to national strength felt by the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people.

It was Communist China, not Nationalist China, that really fought the Japanese. During 1944 and 1945 common enlightened opinion in the United States was preoccupied with the charge that the Central Government's armies were busier trying to block the Communists than defeat the Japanese. The fact is that, in attempting to defeat the Japanese, the Central Government's armies inevitably blocked the expansion of the Chinese Communists. Until 1941, when Russia and Japan signed their first non-aggression pact, the Chinese Communists did fight. Thereafter they expanded as the Japanese expanded; they infiltrated the countryside around the towns that the Japanese occupied, undertook the political and economic organization of it, and instituted their own rule. They fought when they needed supplies, when one of their administrative centers was threatened by a Japanese advance, or when the Japanese made one of their relatively infrequent raids into the countryside. During Japan's 1944 push to cut the whole of China in half, a substantial part of the Japanese forces and a large part of the Japanese supplies passed unmolested in the vicinity of major concentrations of Chinese

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Communist strength. Such facts, available at the time, indicated not a great deal of Communist fighting, but a great deal of Communist expansion.

The Chinese Communists were primarily agrarian reformers, and were pushed after the war into Russian arms by American hostility. One particular article of faith among enlightened Americans was that the Chinese Communists formed an independent group that could be won for friendship to the United States. Yet the Communists themselves had publicly stressed a "younger brother-older brother" closeness to Russia, and whatever their changes in policy, they remained in accord with Moscow's line. Their pamphlets and theoretical writings (which could be had at the capital, Yenan, where American observers were stationed) insisted on the indispensability of Russian aid and counsel to the Chinese revolution. In 1939, for instance, Mao Tse-tung wrote: "This new kind of New Democratic Revolution is part of the world proletarian socialistic revolution, which resolutely fights against imperialism, i.e. international capitalism." In 1944 the Chinese Communist party adopted a resolution reading: "The cooperation of the Chinese Communist party with the United States is a temporary strategy." It is evident today, of course, that the term "agrarian" far from exhausts the interest of the Chinese Communists. What is still not evident to many observers is the existence of a large body of theoretical writings on the usefulness of agrarianism as an avenue to Russian-type dictatorship—much of it in print at the time the agrarian talk became current. It was not American hostility that pushed the Chinese Communists into Russian arms; the Russians pushed them into hostility toward America. The Chinese party changed its line on the United States at precisely the same time as all the other Communist parties throughout the world.

A sinister China Lobby has long been getting in the way of Far Eastern policy and thus bears the onus for whatever may have gone wrong in the Far East. This misconception seems to serve as a sort of counter-punch against assaults on U. S. government policy. Insofar as the cry of "lobby" is a *tu quoque* to the cry of "Red spies," it offers an additional lesson in the foolishness of talking about foreign policy in a high-decibel howl. The trouble with the talk about the "China Lobby" is that this supposed body has been critically lacking in personnel. About the only people who have been trying for any length of time to encourage legislators to look more warmly on Nationalist China are Congressmen Judd and Knowland (who, after all, are elected to talk) and importer Alfred Kohlberg (who, after all, is at liberty to spend money if he wants to in an attempt to affect opinion). There is, of course, Senator McCarthy; indeed, the counter-cry of "lobby" is only one of the many counter-myths this myth-making Senator helps breed. However, in matters Chinese McCarthy is strictly a Johnny-come-lately, vocal and on hand for political row-making today, but nowhere to be heard yesterday on the actual making of policies. About the only Chinese who has tried for any length of time to pressure the executive branch of the government—and practically the only Chinese who has a taste for Western-type pressuring—is T. V. Soong, whose mind has been fertile with supply and loan schemes. There is, of course, the Chinese Embassy; but, by contrast with many other embassies, its voice and its activity are low-pitched.

Indeed, if there was such a thing as a China Lobby, its activities were significantly weak. During the war it was the least effective of the "lobbies" of all our allies, for it was unable to get even a fraction of the supply needs for the Chinese armies, which rotted up to the winter of 1944-45. It was unable even to get wind of the widely pre-discussed Yalta agreement. It was unable to raise an effective voice against the notion of an American-sponsored coalition between the Chinese Communists and the Chinese government. It was unable to clear away the obstacles to effective aid to that government after the war, unable to get permission to use UNRRA funds for long-term rehabilitation instead of short-term relief, unable to prevent the cutting off of all American arms when the uneasy truces between the Chinese government and the Chinese Communists broke, unable even to point out to American officials, Congressmen, and citizens that China was by no means getting as much aid as the formal figures seemed to indicate.

Until the late hour—I believe it was probably mid-1947—when it would have taken miracles, and not simply changes of policy,

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to stop the Communist conquest of China, there was no talk of a China Lobby. The talk started when convictions in Washington on the subject of China—convictions, I repeat, until then shared by almost all literate Americans—became the pretext for a political row of a purely American sort. It should be somewhat obvious that about the last use the Chinese Nationalist government would make of men and money would be to wave its arms or—an activity hardly less public—wiggle its fingers before the American government at a time of fracas over foreign policy, let alone in times of election fisticuffs.

The China Lobby, it would seem, does not deserve serious historical attention as a fact. It is a slogan that can be used—as, alas, so many slogans have been used before—to hint darkly about the sinister influence of feudalistic-minded no-goods; to review the more fantastic charges—from personal immorality to secret imperialism—leveled against Chiang and his government during and after the war; and to gossip about corruption on a colossally super-colossal worldwide scale. (It would be a relief if, for once, there were evidence and not gossip.) Mention of a China Lobby makes it possible to talk about supposedly dark motives behind the disobedience of two Chinese purchasing officers to their government, and to consider supposedly deep policies underlying the pique of a retired war lord now living in the suburbs of New York. It also makes it possible to retail diplomatic chit-chat, to peddle selected and perhaps stolen embassy messages, and even to announce the breaking of the Chinese code. All this can be made into a fascinating story of intrigue, but the only sort of history that can be extracted from it is that of a group mentality which, in matters Chinese, has not only persisted in its uniformity but become even more uniform since McCarthy began talking of the Department of State as a nest of Red spies.

IV

AMERICANS developed their various misconceptions about China at a time when the country had become gray and worn out. In the last years of the war it was not easy to be enthusiastic over works of reform. It was almost essential for Chinese intellectuals and officials to hold several jobs or manage some form of squeeze in order to eat. Armies were decaying at the front for want of supplies, and inflation had bred confusion in government offices and in factories. A few persons argued that these difficulties were those necessarily attending a long war fought by an agricultural country without major outside assistance and financed by means of an inflation. But under the influence of a common climate of opinion, and with a brash devotion to the misconceptions which flourished in that climate, most Americans concluded that Chiang and his government were responsible for almost everything that was wrong in China and that the Communists were responsible for almost everything that was right.

Fancies of this order—although not necessarily this particular fancy—continued to serve as facts long after the Chinese Communists were recognized as Communist. Note, for instance, Dean Acheson's intellectual gymnastics at the MacArthur hearings, where he moved with great verve and aplomb through a series of reports, dates, meetings, statistics, facts, and what may be called semi-facts. He emphasized that there had been no such thing as an effective government in China ("no Chinese government has had authority, by which I mean substantial authority—through China since the period of the Manchus"); that there was a social revolution going on ("the age-long battle between the peasants and the landlords"); that the Chinese government ran into trouble through ineptness rather than through deficiencies in supplies; that the American government had provided vast quantities of the latter; and that the main American activity in China after the war was getting the vanquished Japanese out and refereeing an intramural prize fight.

All this resembled the answer of a man explaining to his neighbor why the dish he had borrowed was broken: I didn't break the dish; it was broken when I got it; I tried to keep it from getting broken; and there really wasn't any dish at all. More important, the facts were highly problematical, even though Mr. Acheson skillfully sought to defend himself by quoting such persons as General Wedemeyer and Chiang Kai-shek. There had been an effective government in China—effective enough to remove, win over, or neutralize the war lords, and to establish paper

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currency throughout the land. There had not been "an age-old battle between peasants and landlords," and the "social revolution" was an armed rebellion which, like all Communist struggles, aimed not to liberate people but to clamp them in a vise-tight system of organization. And the remarks of Chiang Kai-shek and of Foreign Minister Wang Shih-chieh, quoted by Acheson in support of the Yalta pact, were taken out of context: both men were dismayed when they learned about it in June 1945.

Mr. Acheson, who has performed valiantly in containing Russia in Europe, resorted by no means to the deliberate twisting of facts. He was simply reporting what was, as late as June 1951, the consensus of informed opinion on China. Like many another policy-maker, he had to depend on the reports and data made available to him. What was significant about his remarks was the disclosure of the nature of the facts upon which the State Department had to make up its mind—and particularly of the mentality that would let its mind be made up on the basis of such facts.

The argument here is not that China's collapse was for this or the other reason. The argument, rather, is simply that there was a climate of opinion that lacked contact with facts, that there was a line along which literate opinion walked too readily—rock-ribbed Republican and Fair Deal Democrat alike. The fact that ambitious illiterates have recently taken to describing this line as strictly Communist should not be allowed to hide the fact that the line did indeed have certain threads in it of Communist manufacture. But, in turn, this should not be allowed to get in the way of an inquiry as to why American opinion was willing to accept a *line* of any sort with such unanimity, whatever its inspiration.

V

Reasons why there was a line are suggested by the fact that Americans went to China, looked at China, or simply read reports on China because they were concerned, not with a people's situation to be understood, but with a job to be done. Americans found it nettlesome to decide what was going on there, but they also had to reach quick conclusions in order to get on with their assignments, which included nothing less than two urgent and simultaneous tasks—the reform of all China and the defeat of the Japanese empire. The line was essential; once a man had a grip on it he had to hang onto it, for if he lost it he felt himself literally out of touch with the whole immense and confusing problem of China.

The pull behind this line was primarily not the Kremlin, but a new way Americans had found of looking at politics, especially as they involved the relations of democracy to peoples outside our borders, most especially peoples of countries poor in material goods. By virtue of this superior kind of vision, Americans now could look upon the Chinese as objects to be manipulated for large and important purposes, for their own best interests and for the best American interests. There was nearly unanimous agreement among informed Americans that, given their own good will, it was entirely right and proper to manipulate Chinese toward ends that Americans considered good for them.

It is instructive to contrast this agreement with earlier American moral views on the nature of relations between different peoples. If current views stress the conviction that foreign policy is to be judged in terms of the ends it tries to achieve, the earlier views stressed the somewhat different conviction that foreign policy was to be judged—and executed, so far as possible—on the basis of what it contributed to the dignity of man, to the belief that one's own individual person, or that of the man in the next street, next neighborhood, or next country, had value simply by virtue of being a person.

Practically every American proclamation that has stirred foreign peoples—from the Declaration of Independence to the Fourteen Points and the Four Freedoms—has demonstrable roots in this conviction of the dignity of all men, bar none; every proclamation, furthermore, was launched with what might be called warm missionary purpose—the desire to open up a universal and democratic City of Man in which the individual was not subordinated in the final analysis to the ends of organized society.

So far as Europe was concerned, this desire was most practically expressed by free immigration, which was as much an affair of foreign as of domestic policy. It was not feasible for Americans to export democracy

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to Europe, but it was feasible to have Europeans come to America. Free immigration was token of a deep faith that democracy was something for all peoples and not only for a few.

In other parts of the world this American concern for the City of Man took the form of what might be called frontier-style diplomacy. You maintained the right of your neighbor to live a free man in his own house even if he did not live as you did; you helped if his house caught fire; but you did not insist upon knowing his name, let alone upon inquiring into his business and telling him how it ought to be run. The Monroe Doctrine, after all, affirmed in effect the right of self-determination. And self-determination was espoused out of a conviction that men, though they be of different race or even condition of servitude, would in the natural course of things, being of the same basic mind and desires as ourselves, come to a democratic order of society, that being the least objectionable of all known orders.

In the 19th century such ideas of international behavior worked well enough in China to lead the great scholar and official Tsêng Kuo-fan to remark: "The American barbarians are not like the other barbarians; it seems they cherish no idea of trespassing on the sovereignty of China. They are good-natured and express their willingness to negotiate with China on the problems caused by other barbarians." The first envoy of the Chinese Empire to the Western powers was a former American minister to China. American interest in the territorial and administrative integrity of China was an established fact for almost half a century before John Hay almost accidentally formulated and established it as policy in 1899.

Today there is no longer free immigration or talk of it; controlled immigration is the most that liberal opinion is willing to work for in America. There is now a disposition to consider self-determination as nothing more than a slogan presenting interesting problems in semantics. Even among missionaries, concern is not so much with individual Chinese souls (as in the 19th century) as with Chinese institutions: schools, hospitals, governments. And it is no longer fashionable in intellectual circles to talk about the dignity of man. Historically, this sentiment sprang from the Jewish and Christian picture of man as having been created in the image of God, and while it may be possible for many individuals to maintain a lively sense of humanity without belief in God, it is evident that disbelief has given the sentiment of human dignity the character of a mere convention, a thing brought about by social processes and always subject to "changed conditions."

Now it is somewhat difficult for a man who is not certain as to whether there is such a reality as human dignity to feel convinced that a Chinese night-soil carrier has it. It is much easier to regard him as "backward" and hence as a sort of second-class person who needs to have his life re-ordered. The American answer to the question as to whether such a man does have dignity has important bearing on three factors crucial to American relations with China. The first emerged in 1937 when the Japanese invaded China, the second in 1942, when the ratio of military effort between East and West was set, and the third in 1945, when the shape of the peace was molded.

Nineteen thirty-seven was the year it became apparent that the policy of Chinese self-determination had become anachronistic. As late as 1931 Henry L. Stimson had applied it to slap the hands of the Japanese—smartly but ineffectively—when they reached for Manchuria. On the occasion of Japan's full-scale invasion in 1937, Cordell Hull mentioned the policy somewhat timidly, but the Japanese did not appear to listen. They were aware that there was no force, violent or non-violent, to back the policy, apart from that amorphous entity, world opinion. Sympathetic though they were to China during the earlier years of the Japanese invasion, the American people were not enough so to act on the conviction, long embodied in foreign policy, that no foreign power should establish mastery over the Chinese people. Such action would have meant the application of economic and political sanctions—and also some risk of war.

Self-determination still remained, to be sure, the key word of China policy, but it was so little heeded that by 1942, when the United States found itself in the war that it had taken such pains to keep out of, it was possible to make the single most important postwar decision without even considering

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its effect on China's ability to maintain herself as an independent country. This decision concerned who should get what supplies. There were not enough supplies to satisfy the needs of the United States armed forces and at the same time those of all our allies. A clear-cut decision was made to give Europe a high priority, China a low one. This decision was certainly one of the most critical of the war; the President, Churchill, General Marshall, and Mr. Stimson were all agreed upon it. It should have been evident to the American government that the placing and timing of American arms would affect, not only the course of the war, but also the postwar power alignment of the world. This fact was evident, however, to very few people. After a somewhat late start, goods began to flow in quantity to Britain and to Russia; practically none went to China. There could have been no hesitation about supplying Russian land forces in Europe; the Nazi-Soviet war was then touch and go. But there could have been some doubt as to the wisdom of weakening China by depriving her of supplies, particularly since it was evident that, in the event of victory, American aid would have served greatly to increase Soviet strength in the East as well as West. And a minimum could have been spared for China that would hardly have been missed by the American army. Building up Chinese strength by an airlift—as promised in 1942 but not effected until 1944—would have strengthened China immediately against Japan and potentially against the Chinese Communists. By not doing so until too late, the United States and Britain created a power vacuum in the Far East that became highly attractive to Russia.* American policy-makers still talked about "a strong and free China," but gave the matter practically no concerted thought.

Even at the end of the war, our government gave little sign of having thought the problem of China through. It was evident that once the Japanese were displaced from the cities and the Russians moved themselves out of Manchuria, the Chinese Communists would have an excellent chance to move in. This contingency was thought to offer so little threat to either China or the United States that in July 1945 a plan was presented to Chiang Kai-shek for his approval, calling for the landing of the American Tenth Army north of Shanghai—and the arming of a million Chinese Communists. Chiang was so angered that he refused to see any Americans for some days. General Wedemeyer, almost alone among Americans, foresaw a dangerous vacuum. After speculating on what might result from the equation of Russians plus Chinese Communists plus Japanese military equipment, he recommended that seven American divisions be sent into North China and Manchuria to aid in enforcing the Japanese surrender. Chiang agreed to this, and the recommendation was dispatched to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who sent it on to General MacArthur. About to enter Japan, he said no.

* American supplies did not reach China in quantity until 1945, by which time most of the Chinese armies were torpid and the Chinese economy chaotic. Material dispatched in 1944 was used up largely by B-29's in raiding Tokyo.

VI

THIS military myopia was accompanied by political vertigo. If short-sightedness led to the minimization of the importance of China's military position, dizziness and red spots before the eyes can alone explain the great plan of plans for China—part of a great plan of plans for the whole world—which looked to postwar collaboration between the United States and Russia resting on the friendship and like-mindedness of these two supposed comrades-in-arms. The over-all plan had the cordial support of Harry Hopkins and the calculated support, at least, of the President. Adolf A. Berle, Jr., who regarded the whole idea as fanciful, has reported that Dean Acheson was for it. Many, many persons, in government and out, Republicans and Democrats, persuaded that the peace of the world hung on Russo-American friendship, thought that there was hardly any sacrifice too great to make for it.

The Chinese government was to play its part by forming a coalition with the Communists, who were in rebellion against it, and by establishing closer ties with Russia. These last were taken care of by the secret Yalta agreements, which were more important, probably, as an expression of the state of mind that produced them than as the deed that permitted Russia to do what she would most likely have done anyhow. The coalition

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was pressed by American diplomats up until the middle of 1947; it then became obvious that civil war was an inescapable fact in China—and it should also have become obvious then that only a vast amount of United States aid could check the Communists.

The important fact here is not the patent stupidity of trying to force any government to come to terms with an armed Communist opposition, but rather the profounder stupidity of making policy decisions exclusively in terms of power realities, and of overlooking all the moral considerations that are imposed by genuine democratic conviction. This moral obtuseness lay in quoting too facilely slogans about democracy, and in considering too lightly the realities of democratic principles practiced: otherwise the slightest reference to the facts of two decades of history could have revealed to anyone that to think our Russian "partner" possessed any trace of democratic convictions was to indulge in sheer self-delusion. In any case, moral principles and democratic values were so little considered that facts bearing upon them were not considered either.

Essentially, the plan for cooperation with Russia was an attempt to construct a power grid in a world, supposedly, of pure politics. The insistence on a coalition in China was an attempt to deal with the problems of a stricken country, not on the basis of principle—the old principle of keeping China free from foreign domination—but on the exclusive foundation of something called "political expediency." As if there could be such a thing as political realism without reference to the realities of political convictions! As if "realism" did not mean precisely the application of the moral principles of those around council tables! As if Soviet policy were anything else but the application of Russia's own peculiar "moral" principles!

No longer was there mention of the fundamental ideals and tenets that had hitherto been presumed to underlie American policy. During the war quite a number of the State Department's bright young men had become irked with Mr. Hull's reaffirmations of abstract principles of international morality, and they had yearned after a politics of pure calculation, a politics that might even be manipulated in accordance with a "theory of games." But they made the error of thinking that for Stalin, too, politics was a game, with Russian Marxism and world revolution mere counters. For them the Yalta pact symbolized a liberation from moral leading strings.

According to old-fashioned doctrine, people were not means to any end, but ends in themselves; they were to be encouraged toward as much freedom as possible, so that their potentialities as human beings could be realized and their aspirations achieved. The assumptions behind Yalta were very different. To be sure, there was loud talk about the Common Man, but he was now regarded as so common that it was thought best to pre-arrange his destiny for him. People were now to be manipulated for some particular purpose—"bread" or "peace" or the national interest. (Nationalism appears to be one moralistic constant in the relativity of modern morals.) The belief that foreign policy had to have a core of human aspiration was honored in words but denied in practice.

It is obvious, we have said, that policy cannot be separated from conviction, even in the minds of those who insist on this separation. And conviction of a certain sort the policy-makers had indeed. Their hypnosis with *Realpolitik* rested on a certain sort of world view; so did the hypnosis with Communism, with which during the war many intellectuals enjoyed a second honeymoon—the enthusiasm of the 30's having been the first. The core of the matter was that the Americans who talked about China's need for democracy, at the same time that they urged a Popular Front coalition with the Communists, had no real faith in the relevance for Chinese of democratic rights and processes as enjoyed in America. The "realistic" Westerner, looking at poor and stricken China, could not conceive that sick, suffering, and starving persons were capable of caring about their worth as individual persons; all they could conceivably want was full stomachs. With the best will in the world, Americans who would not have accepted economic determinism, let alone Communism, *for themselves,* accepted both for the "backward" Chinese. Most of them did not see culture destroyed, traditional Chinese freedom abrogated, mass imprisonment and mass execution—although a few realists obviously accepted that new First Law of Dynamics of the Political Universe, the impossibility of making omelets without breaking eggs.

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It thus becomes evident why certain informed Americans find a degree of relief in being told that United States opinion about China was manufactured by a few skillful Communists dodging in and out of Washington offices. It becomes equally evident why other informed Americans cry with dismay whenever such reports are made public. The one group finds itself relieved of responsibility for ideas it was only too willing to entertain until quite recently. The other group is horrified to find people whose ideas it still shares being labeled Communist. The one group has to believe that the China decision was the work of a conspiracy and not a manifestation of its own state of mind. The other group has to believe that there could not have been a conspiracy, because the alleged conspirators were simply thinking along the same lines as itself. Neither of these groups, obviously, is in any sense conspiratorial. They only believed the Chinese should be manipulated, not necessarily to the benefit of Russia, but particularly to that of China and the United States. But both groups, just as obviously, cling to the basic idea of authoritarianism: namely, that people have to be led by the nose to great goals which they are too stupid or weak to reach by themselves.

China thus serves in some ways as a more accurate mirror of the collective American mentality than does the United States itself. Americans do believe in democracy in one country—albeit too slipshodly and unthoughtfully—and they will even admit its possibility in some others. But when a country does not consider Asiatics assimilable at all, when it considers Central and East Europeans assimilable only in small numbers, and when it regards Puerto Ricans and Filipinos as second-class citizens, then a very basic moral confusion exists as to the nature of democratic government. With individuals of religious background this confusion often takes the form of a belief that morals, if there are such things, are private matters, and that a vague urge toward doing good is the sole requisite and key to political rectitude.

VII

If such uniform confusion about the nature of morality and the role of democracy lies at the root of recent American policy toward China, does it not become hard to pin the primary responsibility for foreign policy on a few officials alone? Obviously they have some responsibility, but I suspect that it is basically of a symbolic nature. These officers represent the public not only in an outward but in an inward guise; they manifest the varied emotional and intellectual shadings of their American environment—an environment that is made up essentially of literate men and women. Certainly, and finally, the China decision cannot be taken as the work of undercover Communists. Is it not by now clear that what was primarily responsible was American opinion in general, and educated opinion in particular—an opinion based on clichés erroneously taken for facts, an opinion alienated from the roots of American democracy?

The breadth of this responsibility becomes evident when one examines the mechanisms through which history worked to effect the China decision. They included everything from informal chats at the State Department to table-talk at the Press Hostel in Chungking. They included the publications of the Institute of Pacific Relations and books that were enthusiastically reviewed in the most responsible newspapers and magazines. They included many of the operations of the OWI and the USIS; they included courses taught in highly regarded universities. They included the Chungking office of the Communist party of China and the offices of the Communist party of the United States.

Behind all these mechanisms were "experts" in great numbers. (Foreign policy is nowadays the work of increasingly large collections of personnel.) If one refuses to accept history and the devices through which it operates as matters of fate, it is impossible to overlook the fact that all these enclaves reached certain identical conclusions, that they reached them because still larger enclaves agreed with them; and that all of them together reached a particular conclusion because they started from much the same premises. Taking their departure from vague good will and uncertain democratic conviction, these groups deluded themselves into believing that simplified and sometimes quasi-Stalinist analyses of the problems of "backward" countries provided precisely that sound basis of agreement among thinking people which would usher in an efficient,

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manipulatable world—a world in which non-thinking people without enough to eat would happily sacrifice themselves to five-year plans. It is clear now that the men who tried to establish this latter-day covenant formed a sort of self-chosen herd-elite, esteemed by their fellow thinkers to the degree that they agreed with each other, and sought to influence the American people to think the things they thought.

What is significant here is not the membership list of this elite, but that it was so large and so unanimous; what should most disturb anyone concerned with the strength and security of our government was that none of the men in it—and many of them were noted scholars and patriots—was able to rise above common general opinion and look at the situation for himself. There were no effective voices, no effective leaders. One suspects that it may have been the habit of earlier American policy-makers to take responsibility for their beliefs and conclusions. Certainly this was *not* the habit of our latter-day policy-makers, or even of those opposed to them—and to anyone who remembers the traditional role of outspoken, courageous opposition in democracy, this last fact is possibly the most disturbing of all. It was only after the China policy had collapsed that opposition to it became vocal; and, of course, this opposition now runs some risk of becoming a blind line itself.

THE responsibility for the China decisions thus comes to rest upon a very great many Americans—so many that one is almost tempted to speak of the collective responsibility of educated American opinion as a whole. The plain fact and the sad fact is that no one was strong enough in knowledge, in spirit, and in conviction to halt a stampede.

Happily, Americans can never fully submit themselves to power politics; morality still remains at least the language of most of us when we talk foreign policy. The China decision, perhaps more than any other aspect of American intercourse with the world, reveals democratic faith at its lowest ebb. Other decisions, other policies, show improvement. It certainly was no ruthless view of the realities of power that led Mr. Truman and Mr. Acheson to commit the United States to action against aggression in Korea. And in finally applying, in 1951, the principle of non-recognition to Communist China —just as Henry L. Stimson applied it in 1931 to Japan—United States policy finds itself standing on its traditional policy of refusing recognition to regimes that are imposed on a people by a foreign power.

But there is the old trouble: the State Department goes on claiming that non-recognition is the ground on which it has always stood. By insisting upon outward consistency, by refusing to admit that its feet ever move, the Department assumes a position that looks not unlike the same old moral and political paralysis, and this helps keep alive unfortunate suspicions of lack of candor on its part, and even of lack of good faith. The Department thus sacrifices the moral authority that could come from a ready admission of a changed position. Somehow, the more the line changes the more it stays the same. Somehow, the deep confusion at the root of foreign policy seems to linger; somehow, whatever is wrong at the root of American intellectual life seems to persist and to find in U. S. foreign policy its greatest flowering.

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CAN OLD-TIME DIPLOMACY CHECK SOVIET POWER?

Mr. Kennan and the Politics of Containment

SIDNEY HERTZBERG

IT IS probably intellectual snobbery to suggest that the trouble with American foreign policy has been that the men who make it do not read books, especially books written by foreigners. Or if they read them, they do not take them seriously. Yet it does seem that, with Hitler's *Mein Kampf* in print, Cordell Hull and his successors might have been better prepared for the events in Europe of the 30's. And there is little evidence that in dealing with the events of the 40's, our policy-makers were armed with an understanding of Lenin's works and Stalin's emendations of them. Facing the 50's, we can only hope that somebody in Washington is reading Jawaharlal Nehru and Mao Tse-tung.

These observations are somewhat irrelevantly inspired by the minor furor created by an American foreign policy-maker who did read a book, George F. Kennan. Mr. Kennan has read, among other things, the works of Lenin. On the basis of these readings, and of his diplomatic experience, he wrote an urbane, learned, and perceptive essay, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," which appeared in *Foreign Affairs* in 1947. The essay was signed "Mr. X," presumably out of deference to the feeling that a public display of cerebration by a State Department official was unseemly. When it became known that "Mr. X" was director of the Policy Planning Staff of the State Department, two curious developments followed.

First, intelligent people of varying views closed ranks around Mr. Kennan. A thoughtful official was rare enough to require solidarity among the thoughtful. There grew up a kind of Kennan cult to encourage reflection in the State Department. This cult should be joined. It has nothing to do with just what it is Kennan thinks or with the objective value of his thinking. His essay, by itself, was an able but minor contribution to the literature on Stalinism. It was remarkable because it came from a high official.

Second, because Kennan's essay held that the Soviets are serious about their intentions and should be contained, he swiftly became an object of intense interest among anti-Communists, and especially among the non-Communist leftists who tended to claim him as one of their own. This tendency could draw no support from the actual content of Kennan's article. It was perhaps based on a liberal delusion that all men of urbanity, learning, or perception must be liberals.

It is now possible to clarify matters, and since Kennan has returned to government service as Ambassador to Moscow, matters are worth clarifying. He has provided a fuller statement of his views in a book, *American Diplomacy 1900-1950* (University of Chicago Press). Though the book suffers from reticences that are probably due to the au-

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SIDNEY HERTZBERG, one of our most thoughtful students of contemporary history, wrote the highly regarded "Month in History" department in this magazine during its first two years. Earlier he had been editor of *Common Sense* and had held editorial positions on the New York *Times*, *Time* magazine, and *Current History;* at present he is American correspondent for the *Hindustan Times*. Like Mr. Maurer, whose article precedes his in these pages, Mr. Hertzberg belongs to that, at the moment, not altogether fashionable school of political thinkers that believes there is an important relation between ideals and morals, on the one hand, and governmental policy and practice on the other. He here examines critically the problem so sharply posed by George Kennan, our new ambassador to Moscow, of whether the American democracy can or should try to "contain" the Soviet empire by resorting to the traditional diplomacy of the "balance of power."

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thor's expectation of continuing his diplomatic career, it is explicit enough to warrant the conclusion that, while Kennan is indeed thoughtful and in favor of containing Communism, he is also—in the literal sense of the word—a reactionary.

KENNAN'S book consists of two parts. The first contains six lectures given recently at the University of Chicago in which he appraises the main aspects of our foreign relations during the last fifty years. The other consists of his two articles on Russia in *Foreign Affairs,* the second being "America and the Russian Future," which appeared in April 1951. Kennan suggests that the second part can be taken as reflecting the intellectual approach of the first.

The burden of Kennan's containment essay published in 1947 is familiar. His analysis of Soviet conduct leads him to the conclusion that "there can never be on Moscow's side any sincere assumption of a community of aims between the Soviet Union and powers which are regarded as capitalism." He also finds that the Soviet Union is weaker than the Western world, that its policy is highly flexible, and that its society probably contains seeds of decay which are already sprouting. Therefore he suggests "a policy of firm containment, designed to confront the Russians with unalterable counter-force at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world." Because Kennan does not enlarge on this policy, I quote another of his definitions of containment: "the adroit and vigilant application of counter-force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and maneuvers of Soviet policy, but which cannot be charmed or talked out of existence." Holding the line, plus a vague regeneration of American life, would promote tendencies that will result in "either the break-up or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power."

Kennan's second essay considers what kind of Russia we would like to have in the world community and how we can facilitate its coming into being. He sees no use in looking for "a capitalistic and liberal-democratic" Russia. The most we may hope from Russia is "that she lift forever the Iron Curtain, that she recognize certain limitations to the internal authority of government, and that she abandon, as ruinous and unworthy, the ancient game of imperialist expansion and oppression."*

Kennan argues eloquently against a Vansittartist approach to Russia. All humanity is in some degree vulnerable to totalitarianism, he says. We must constantly hold before the Russian people evidences of our sympathetic understanding, even if we have to go to war against them. If release can come to Russia "by erosion from despotism," we can help the process best by keeping alive the alternative of a decent civilization.

TO SAY, even cogently, that Soviet expansion should be contained, and that we should press for a new regime free of the excesses of totalitarianism, is no more controversial than the proposition that the cost of living should be contained. It will be questioned only by Stalinist fellow-travelers, advocates of preventive war, and pacifists. But, unfortunately, Kennan gives us little beyond the vaguest and most impalpable sense of the concrete reality of Communism: the brutal solidity of its totalitarian rule over Russia and her satellites, its unwavering pressure to extend that domination over the entire globe. Unhappily, too—and perhaps in consequence of this first omission—he leaves us with only the meagerest definition of that "containment" which is to serve to restrain this literally awful force.

Does containment simply mean that the United States Marines come a-running, like Keystone cops, whenever something erupts at one of these "constantly shifting" points? Korea was open and legally recognizable aggression. It may perhaps not be so obvious

* Peter Meyer, in his article "The Driving Force Behind Soviet Imperialism" in the March COMMENTARY argues that, far from being "ancient," Russian expansion is something quite new under the sun.

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in Viet Nam, Burma, Iran, Malaya. It may not be obvious at all in India or Italy. How does containment apply—in terms of general criteria—at these "geographical and political points," at all of which there is evidence of Soviet encroachment?

More important, does "counter-force" mean physical force only? Presumably, it must include political measures. What kind of political measures? And can political measures mean much without economic action? Does counter-force, then, include economic aid? If so, on what scale and how applied? And do we do all this alone? Where, if anywhere, does the United Nations come in—militarily, politically, economically, morally?

KENNAN answers none of these questions directly. There are, however, clearly marked clues in the first part of his book. His reflections on American foreign policy during the last fifty years are delightfully poisonous. Much of what he says seems valid and has inevitably been said before. Again, the extraordinary thing is that it should come from a diplomat whose career is in high gear. Perhaps the explanation for Kennan's survival in the foreign service is the finesse with which he has accomplished his mayhem. He has removed all the stuffing from such hallowed shirts as John Hay's, but he has carefully buttoned up the shirts again, leaving the State Department's pantheon apparently intact.

Kennan's central criticism of our foreign policy is that it has never been based on any realistic notion of "the national interest." It has amounted to a series of improvisations arising from moral and legal illusions and mischievous domestic pressures. In the decision to make war against Spain in 1898, "popular moods, political pressures, and inner-governmental intrigue were decisive," and afterward we were left with possessions we were unequipped to handle. The Open Door policy seems to have been the result of a series of coincidences; it was meaningless before it was proclaimed, though this has not prevented the growth of a hardy myth that it was a triumph of American diplomacy. The "Open Door," like the "administrative and territorial integrity of China," were high-sounding phrases that cost us nothing to enunciate and gave us a feeling of moral superiority and legal rectitude; but we never came forward with practical alternatives to the actions these policies proscribed, and the results of this sanctimonious irresponsibility are now visible in China. The First World War was "tragic and nonsensical" in its origin and in its course, and Versailles "was the sort of peace you get when you allowed war hysteria and impractical idealism to lie down together in your mind."

Kennan is less sharp on the Second World War. By 1939, he seems to feel, so many opportunities had been lost that the war was unpreventable; he believes it was clear from the beginning that the war was not "fully winnable," because military victory required the collaboration of one or another of the three totalitarian powers and such collaboration forestalled an unsullied democratic political victory.

With all that, however, he is surprisingly tolerant of wartime political decisions based on the hope that peaceful postwar collaboration with the Soviets was possible. Of this general attitude Kennan writes:

"Many of us who were familiar with Russian matters were impatient with this line of thought at the time, because we knew how poor were the chances of success, and we saw no reason why a Western world which kept its nerves, its good humor, and a due measure of military preparedness should not continue indefinitely to live in the same world with the power of the Kremlin without flying to either of the extremes of political intimacy or war. In the light of what has occurred subsequently, I can see that our view, too, was not fully rounded. We were right about the nature of Soviet power; but we were wrong about the ability of American democracy at this stage in its history to bear for long a situation full of instability, inconvenience and military danger."

There is no Kennan program for the future conduct of our international relations. He has, however, a formula—it is not unfair

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to say a panacea—called "old-fashioned diplomacy." The ingredients of this formula are a mistrust of democratic impulses affecting the formulation of foreign policy, a profound scorn for the "legalistic-moralistic approach to international problems," devotion to "the national interest," and a conviction that international relations consist of little more than maintaining a balance between conflicting national interests. Almost anything else you can think of—most especially, world government of any kind—Kennan is against. It is through this panacea that Kennan emerges as the classical reactionary and, despite his policy-planning and ambassadorship, as an uncompromising opponent of the present tendency of American foreign policy.

Consider, first, Kennan on democracy. Though he has little use for his predecessors in high places during the last fifty years, he almost invariably manages to absolve them by ascribing their follies to pressures from the people. McKinley is thus excused for the Spanish-American War. Hay must not be blamed: "He labored in a framework of government which was unsuited, really, to the conduct of the foreign affairs of a great power." Kennan thinks World War I was unrelieved tragedy; but what he would have had Wilson do was impossible, he says, in the face of domestic political realities. What he regards as the great mistakes of World War II were not made by highly placed individuals; he suggests they were "the deeper mistakes of understanding and attitude on the part of our society in general."

What bothers him most about a democratic society is its "failure to appreciate the limitation of war in general—any war—as a vehicle for the achievement of the objectives of the democratic state." Force must be related to purpose and method. "If this were better understood, there could be neither the sweeping moral rejection of international violence which bedevils so many Americans in times of peace nor the helpless abandonment to its compulsions and its inner momentum which characterizes so many of us in times of war." Democracy fights in anger. The problem is how to employ force "for rational and restricted purposes."

These are valid strictures. What would Kennan do about it? In what way is our "framework of government" (the same now as in Hay's day) "unsuited" to the conduct of foreign affairs? How can the democratic process operate in our foreign relations without subverting the continuous devotion to the national interest that Kennan desires?

Kennan has two suggestions. He advances them casually, does not bother to argue in their favor, and himself dismisses them as impractical. The first is "much more effective use of the principle of professionalism," which should not be impossible. The second is adoption of the British system of parliamentary responsibility. The second suggestion is a puzzle. In making it, Kennan complains that the machinery of decision-making lacks "privacy, deliberateness, or the long-term approach." At the same time he advocates such a change because it would clarify the claim of an administration to speak for the mass of the people in foreign affairs. But Kennan's repeated criticism of the phenomenon of public opinion in foreign affairs is not that it fails to register with the executive. He clearly feels that it registers too often and too effectively; his whole point is that public opinion is emotional and subjective, and therefore disastrous to the national interest. Giving the people the opportunity to change governments whenever their emotions change is hardly the answer to Kennan's own complaint. It seems exactly the sort of thing that would further limit privacy, deliberateness, and the long-term approach—unless Kennan thinks that the professionals would somehow see to this, in which case it's not more democratic responsiveness he wants but less. At any rate, he cannot have it both ways. It makes no sense to advocate a more direct voice for the people in foreign affairs when you deeply mistrust that voice.

Kennan's failure to grapple with this problem—in the context of his nostalgia

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for old-fashioned diplomacy—raises a valid doubt about his fundamental understanding of democracy. In his essays on Russia, Kennan says that containment is not enough and that "the most important influence" we can exert on internal Russian developments is the influence of what we are. And what should we be? We must, Kennan says, give the world "the impression of a country which knows what it wants, which is coping successfully with the problems of its internal life and with the responsibilities of a World Power, and which has a spiritual vitality capable of holding its own against the major ideological currents of the time." Kennan offers nothing more specific, except possibly this: "No iron curtain could suppress, even in the innermost depths of Siberia, the news that America had shed the shackles of disunity, confusion and doubt, had taken a new lease of hope and determination, and was setting about her tasks with enthusiasm and clarity of purpose."

From a man who haughtily abjures moralistic clichés in international affairs, this string of Fourth of July phrases is a bewildering anti-climax. We always have cause to feel uneasy about men who think disunity and confusion are shackles on democracy that must be shed. Since Kennan believes that the solution of our internal problems may very well be "the most important influence" on the Soviets, he is called upon to reveal more of his own mind about these problems than is expressed in his obvious discomfort over the intellectual untidiness of democratic processes. It is easy to imagine solutions that would delight, not confound, Stalin. Conceivably one such solution could be the extension of the principles of "old-fashioned diplomacy" to the domestic scene, giving us old-fashioned solutions all along the line that avoid confusion and disunity.

The problem Kennan raises remains. It requires a bit of arrogance to decide which of the people's impulses are—or even in retrospect were—wrong. Probably the kind of clear, smooth-running purposefulness that Kennan wants is unattainable in our democracy. Yet, less emotionalism in the public's response to events is no doubt desirable. The signs show that this is developing.

There is a difference between Korea and the Spanish-American War. Fifty years ago the people as a whole cared little about foreign policy and knew less. The State Department knew and cared only a little more. It was possible for William Randolph Hearst to create an uproar that sounded like the voice of the people and topple McKinley into a war. But the MacArthur uproar of the last year, which was an emotional orgy, did not become an irresistible cry for unlimited war. Kennan's sharpest criticism of the democratic process in foreign affairs is that it runs away with itself in a war crisis. Force, he insists, must be used for "rational and restricted purposes." On the whole, this is precisely how we have been using force for the last year and a half. There has been bitter controversy over Korea, but so far neither the people nor the executive have been panicked into irrationality.

Unlike the Spanish-American War, Korea has implications that the people recognize as immediate, ponderable, and directly affecting them. They will therefore think about them or listen to people who think about them. The Marshall Plan seems to have had general support and this could not have been purely on the basis of emotionalism; a little simple reasoning was required to see its point. In any case, the cure for a badly informed people is a better informed people, and not a retreat from the people altogether.

This regression from democracy—which I believe is essentially a flight from reality—is reflected in Kennan's observations about the national interest and his strictures on the "legalistic-moralistic approach."

Kennan doesn't define the national interest. The doctrine of the national interest apparently means that whatever it is that the national interest is, can be defended only by an old-fashioned diplomatic game called balance of power, the playing of which game then becomes *in* the national interest. Anyone who is against old-fashioned diplomacy is therefore against the national interest.

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Kennan's approach is that of "taking the awkward conflicts of national interest and dealing with them on their merits with a view to finding the solutions least unsettling to the stability of international life."

What he has no use for is the legalistic-moralistic approach, which is "to find some formal criteria of a juridical nature by which the permissible behavior of states could be defined." Only a part of international society would subordinate itself to international law, he says. As a result of national aspirations, international relationships constantly change. "A legal strait jacket" would inhibit rather than facilitate this process; to moderate these conflicts is "a task for diplomacy, in the most old-fashioned sense of the term."

Let's apply this pseudo-realism to reality. What the United States faces in the world is not "awkward conflicts" that require "least unsettling" solutions. There are dozens of "awkward conflicts" in the pending file but they are no immediate threat to civilization —except as they might affect the one conflict that overshadows all others, the conflict with Stalinist totalitarianism. This threat is different in kind as well as degree from any the world has faced. This is so not because it aims at world conquest (which it does), but because it combines physical and psychological force and because, for the first time, the technical weapons of physical and psychological warfare are sufficiently effective to make the aim of world conquest attainable. Therefore, reconciling national interests—something one did (in between wars) by old-fashioned diplomacy—does not apply. For the procedure assumes that everybody's national interest has some limits, subjective or objective; but the Soviet Union's national interest is unlimited, as is in the nature of totalitarianism, Nazi or Communist.

The profession of reconciling national interests required another essential condition: that the respective old-fashioned diplomats were in practical control of the situations they were reconciling. There have been periods when social forces were sufficiently stable to allow statesmen to haggle away people's destinies with comparative, though obviously temporary, impunity. But today power is a highly volatile substance; it won't stay put on green baize tables or on those little portable scales old-fashioned diplomats carry in those attaché cases. Today, as never before, power is people in motion, not documents with official seals. Diplomacy might be able to deal with Mossadegh, but how can it deal with the Tudeh party? What can diplomacy—the old-fashioned kind—do about land-hungry peasants in India, Moslem fanaticism in Egypt, the unemployed in Italy, neutralism in France, or the preventive-war psychology in the United States? What can diplomacy do about the Cominform that it wasn't able to do about the Comintern? Unfortunately for the players of the old game, not only have the ground rules changed, but the ground itself is heaving.

I have tried without success to find some subtle connection between containment and old-fashioned diplomacy, two pillars of Kennan's faith. Can containment mean a balance of power between the Soviet world and the rest of mankind? But Kennan's justification for containment in the first place was his own convincing demonstration that Stalinism won't stay balanced, even when it says it will. No doubt Stalin would sign a pact dividing the world with the President of the United States. He has already signed several. But Stalin would again, as he has, upset the balance by methods far beyond the reach of old-fashioned diplomacy.

How can these extra-diplomatic methods be met? Insofar as they are being met in Korea, it is being done through an approach that could be called, because of the involvement of the United Nations, legal and moral. Kennan throws the UN into the wastebasket, along with the Kellogg Pact, the Hague conventions, and other scraps of paper. This seems to me not only bravado but, again, peudo-realism: it fails to consider the UN experience in Korea, which tends to undermine his whole case against international law. Old-fashioned diplomacy may have had some kind of program at hand

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when the Communists moved in Korea. But the course our government chose—at a moment, strangely enough, when Kennan was planning its foreign policy—was to try activation of collective military resistance through the UN. In doing so we invoked, for what it was worth, the existing system of international law.

The UN authorized military action. It reaffirmed its old aim: a united, independent, and democratic Korea. It committed itself to the economic reconstruction of Korea. The whole operation was legalistic and moralistic, and it nevertheless involved a realistic resort to consistently limited force. Because of "the inevitable association of legalistic ideas with moralistic ones," says Kennan, military action when undertaken "knows no bounds short of the reduction of the lawbreaker to the point of complete submissiveness—namely, unconditional surrender." Not in Korea, at least not yet. Nor has the UN applied its law "inflexibly," which Kennan claims is a fault of international legalism that diplomacy avoids. If Kennan were correct, there would be no truce talks in Korea; there would be only a trial of the aggressors. The Korean experience so far demonstrates that the legalistic-moralistic approach is capable of military moderation, that it doesn't necessarily throw the whole law book at the offender, and that a measure of effective international military cooperation is possible.

The present American sentiment for localizing the war in Korea is not surprising. Why assume that the people are incapable of understanding the consequences of total war or are possessed with a mass-suicidal urge? Much more remarkable was the initial unanimity for going to war against a force that had not attacked us physically. The reason for it, it seems to me, could not have been concern over the upsetting of the balance of power. Fighting in Korea meant national mobilization and death for draftees. For such sacrifices, people instinctively seek a higher aim than redressing the balance of power by applying counter-force in a place they hardly heard of. The people reacted as they did because their sense of justice was outraged. When they fail to react in this way, American democracy can close up shop.

CERTAINLY moral indignation can get out of hand—especially when the moral issue is trumped up and the deception must be blanketed by hysteria. This has happened. But in the case of the UN action in Korea, many Americans somehow recognize a fundamentally valid moral cause for which to fight. Among the reasons for this is a growing understanding of the nature of the enemy. But certainly, another of the reasons is the involvement of the UN. The UN has helped validate the war and is partly responsible for the unexpected combination of determination and restraint with which it is being carried on.

The UN is an operating international organism only in an amoebic sense. But it is the moral rallying ground for the defense of certain values which many people, including Americans, share. For some Americans, and they are probably among the least emotional and subjective in their reactions, the national interest is identical with the aims of the UN. Against these aims we have verified our own response to Stalinist totalitarianism, and we know it is not an empty moralistic improvisation. As a result we have been willing to sustain both the physical burdens and the emotional disciplines of a sober war in Korea. It is doubtful that we could have done this unilaterally, under some arid interpretation of containment.

Furthermore, whether the hoarders of national sovereignty like it or not, the UN as a symbol is developing a sanction of its own. While this sanction is physically unenforceable, it can have a decisive effect on the minds of free men. Almost every aspect of the UN's war, even much of its military strategy, is open to the world's scrutiny and subject to correction against a public, universally recognized, standard of conduct. This situation means that democratic leadership must be alert; it provides as good a guarantee as is now available against corruption of the war's political aims and bravura in its military operations.

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For many people, the UN is a democratic crusade. It is one of the alternative crusades to Soviet totalitarianism. One would not have thought it a particularly effective one were it not for the fierce efforts of the Soviets to destroy it and return to old-fashioned big-power diplomacy. Apart from people's long-term hopes for the UN, which Kennan would dismiss as the delusions of amateurs, the UN has been demonstrably valuable for even a narrow concept of containment. It is enormously important for our purposes outside the Atlantic world that Korea is, if only on the record, a UN and not an American or Anglo-American operation. What makes the threat to Viet Nam and Malaya particularly serious is the probability that in a showdown the Atlantic powers would have to go it alone, without even moral support from the UN, because of the remnants of colonialism in these areas.

It is being said that the United States has perverted the UN into nothing more than an anti-Soviet alliance. If this is true, it is a criticism of the Soviets and not of us. In any case, the elimination of everything totalitarianism stands for is one way of describing the basic aims of the UN charter. But UN support against totalitarianism seems to be available only on terms that make it a valid struggle. No doubt the State Department, to rally international support for resistance in Korea, used all the methods it could get away with. But it would not have been possible to get almost the entire world outside the Soviet bloc committed in some degree unless Korea had involved a moral issue which free people could recognize clearly.

KENNAN ignores economic policy completely. He has managed to produce a book on American foreign policy which does not even mention the Marshall Plan. Economic aid can be crucial in underdeveloped areas, a segment of the world Kennan also ignores. Economic aid through functional international organizations (a phenomenon which Kennan, again, ignores) might solve some of the serious difficulties involved in insuring effective use of such aid. By itself, economic aid is not a panacea. In the end it might simply increase the value of prizes that will go to Moscow. How economic aid can assure a democratic development in receiving countries and avoid undemocratic attitudes in donor countries is one of the most urgent problems we face. One would have thought that our policy-planners would be applying themselves to such matters.

The unrelieved negativism of Kennan's total approach to the international scene is frightening. He is for containment, but in what sense is he against Communism or for democracy? At one point he urges us to accept power realities "without feeling the obligation of moral judgment, to take them as existing and inalterable human forces, neither good nor bad, and to seek their point of maximum equilibrium rather than their reform or their repression." At the same time, he describes the Soviet role in the world, which he hopes it will abandon, as "the ancient game of imperialist expansion and oppression." Is this what the Soviet dynamo amounts to—the ancient game, played by many powers in the past, to be played by others in the future, nothing to get excited about, nothing you can change or ought to change, something you bring into equilibrium through the good old doctrine of the diplomatic popular front? In proposing containment, has Kennan avoided making a moral judgment? Is Soviet totalitarianism neither good nor bad? Is its drive for world conquest alterable or inalterable? Does not containment mean its reform, if alterable, or its repression, if inalterable?

Kennan is caught in a trap of his own making. He has decided that moral reactions are not to be trusted. He therefore expects people not to have any, and he does not permit himself any either. His intelligence perceives, at least partly, the nature of the Soviet system, but he resists a final synthesis and a judgment. He is left, therefore, with the immorality of old-fashioned diplomacy. Limited by the restraints he inflicts on himself, his only essential complaint against the Soviets can be that they disturb the balance of power.

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THE GOLDEN AGE OF TOMASHEFSKY

At the Tables Down at Schreiber's

S. L. BLUMENSON

IN THE late 1890's and the early years of this century the meeting place of the Yiddish theatrical world was Schreiber's Saloon, located in a long and narrow store at 33 Canal Street on the Lower East Side of New York, around the corner from Sigmund Manilevscu's Café Essex and across the street from Herrick's Café. Schreiber, one of the staunchest supporters of the Yiddish theater, had a reputation for generosity, and his free lunch, which included delicacies for all tastes, from *mameliga* and knishes to herring and pretzels, literally saved the early Yiddish stage from extinction by starvation.

Half the space was taken up by the usual mahogany-finished long bar with well-polished brass rail and the usual assortment of shining brass spittoons, although Schreiber's patrons, paying or otherwise, did not chew tobacco. This part of the saloon had been installed by the brewing company that supplied Schreiber with beer and, as was customary, held a mortgage on the premises. In the back were bare wooden tables and unpainted chairs to which customers could retire with their deep schooners of lager to drink at leisure.

Most of the day Schreiber's Saloon resembled a market place, or perhaps the meeting hall of a Jewish lodge. Here all those gathered who were even remotely connected with the Yiddish stage, and with them gathered their many admirers. Newly arrived actors, budding authors, unemployed choristers came seeking an evening's employment. Here also were the prompters, very important functionaries in theaters that had to give as many as nine performances a week, each of a different play and usually without rehearsals. Rhymesters, composers, and arrangers sat in different corners, comparing notes, reciting new lyrics, humming new tunes.

The Yiddish spoken at Schreiber's was not the East Side variety. It was the *hoch* Yiddish common to Yiddish literature during the 19th century up to the time of the elder Shomer. Known as *Deitchmerish*, or *Kalvarier Deitch*, it consisted of a conglomeration of Hebrew, Russian, Yiddish, and German, pronounced in the supposedly German manner. (The *Tzena-Urena*, the Yiddish tales based on parts of the Old Testament interpreted for pious women, was written in a language akin to *Deitchmerish;* plain Yiddish, being considered a jargon, was not for literary use.) Flowery, formal, and heavy with rhetoric, *Deitchmerish* was the ideal language for the Yiddish stage. Thus, to give a sample, a young lady pleads before a judge for the release of her fiance: *"Ich gebe ihnen meinem liebsten dank für alles vos sie haben die ehre gehabt ahn meine zertliche mutter zu verrichten, und ihr hertzlichen hertz far velches ich gross abshei habe; und ihr gute gite lassen mich nicht ruhen sie zu betten, das sie meinem braitegam, meinen geliebten Gabriel Handler die fogel freiheit shenken mechten."*

Among the authors who sat in Schreiber's, the most prominent were Zaifert, Sharkansky, Latteiner, and M. Ish Hurwitz ha-Levy; these four were the chief purveyors of the romantic and historical musicals and farces which the East Side audiences favored until the advent of Jacob M. Gordin and his

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IN THE golden age of the Yiddish theater, when Tomashefsky strode the boards and Gordin ruled the literary roost, the drama was almost as burning a subject as politics. In fact it had its own politics, in which groups of *patrioten* were ready to fight and fall on the barricades to prove the superiority of their particular theatrical idol over all others. Readers will remember previous articles by S. L. BLUMENSON, presenting reminiscences of New York's Lower East Side during the early years of this century; the most recent, "Culture on Rutgers Square," appeared in our July 1950 issue. Mr. Blumenson came to this country over fifty years ago from Russia; since 1935 he has lived in California.

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more serious era. Other habitués were Silverman, Karp, and Chaimovitch, the trail blazers who came from Bessarabia with their troupe in 1884 and gave performances of *Shulamith* and other Goldfaden plays, first in Turn Hall on Fourth Street, and later at the Oriental Opera House on the upper Bowery.

There were also the members of the troupe which the producers Prozdovitch and Resenstein had brought over from Rumania. These were Russian exiles (Yiddish theater had been forbidden in Russia by the May laws of 1882), among them names like Finkel, the famous comedian Mogulesco, Feinman, David Kessler, and Weinblat. Most of these became featured luminaries in later years. With them came also the first Mrs. Finkel as prima donna, and Mrs. Edelstein as dramatic lead. "Professor" M. Ish Hurwitz ha-Levy was of this troupe; he wrote the plays and served also as an actor. Later, such men as Jacob Adler, Boris Tomashefsky, and Rudolph Marks joined the crowd at Schreiber's.

The most important among the song writers was Shlomo Shmulevits, who resembled Grover Cleveland in size and mustache, wrote more than five hundred of the most tender and popular songs of his day, and beat out dozens of complete librettos. He is best remembered for the most famous of his songs, *"A Brivelle der Mamen"* ("A Letter to Mama"), renditions of which have called forth oceans of tears.

But the most important of the habitués of the saloon, who were daily treated to more brimming schooners than they could consume, were the leaders of the three different groups of *patrioten*—roughly equivalent to "fan clubs." These giants of the theatrical world were: Moishe Belas, who being Hungarian was called Moishe Goulash; Yussel Jaffe, who being Rumanian was called Yussel Mameliga; and Israel Melnick, who being a Litvak was called Izzelle Tzailemkop ("crosshead"). These three, through their following of patrioten, could make or break an actor or a play.

Moishe Goulash presided over the muses at the Thalia Theatre, Yussel Mameliga at the Windsor Theatre, and Izzelle Tzailemkop at the People's Theatre which had replaced the old London Theatre, right next door to Miner's Burlesque, famous for its Friday amateur nights.

Of course, outside of these three groups, every performer, important or not, had his own personal following of loyal patrioten; the most vociferous of these groups were Boris Tomashefsky's, made up of women of all ages, and that of his wife Bessie Tomashefsky, made up of men of all ages. But such groups were interested solely in the particular actor or actress they supported; the theater-in-general belonged to the Big Three.

While Schreiber's was neutral ground for the three factions, each group also had its own headquarters. The Rumanian group, under the leadership of Yussel Mameliga, met at the Campus Café on Delancey Street.

Campus was famous for his mameliga all over the Rumanian section of the East Side. Outside his restaurant was a sign depicting the seven stages of man. It pictured a thin, undernourished, and bedraggled man, hatless and wearing torn, laceless shoes, entering the Campus Café on Sunday. On Monday it showed this same man a little stronger and neater. Tuesday he was a good deal stouter; on Wednesday, quite stout, with whole shoes, well laced, and wearing an old fedora. On Thursday he showed further marked improvement in weight and general appearance. Friday there was the beginning of a bay window. And on the Sabbath he was shown coming out of the Café bearing all the marks of an "all-rightnik": new suit, a new derby, pointed patent leather shoes, a heavy gold watch chain across the newly acquired paunch, a toothpick in one side of the mouth, a satisfied grin on the face. Underneath was the slogan: *Est un lacht*—"Eat and laugh."

Yussel Mameliga was employed at the Campus as one of the two waiters. Yussel knew all the steady customers and greeted them with all the deference, dignity, and finesse of a continental waiter. Thus when Mr. Hershel Greenberg of Greenberg's Haberdashery entered, Yussel would cry out, "A nice schnitzel for Mr. Greenberg!" and would rush forward to escort Mr. Greenberg to his table, pull out a chair for him, tuck a napkin under his double chin. Mr. Greenberg was a generous tipper. You didn't

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have to offer toothpicks to Mr. Greenberg. Mr. Greenberg was good for as much as twenty-five cents a week.

Yussel's cry of "A nice schnitzel for Mr. Greenberg!" would be relayed loudly by the bus boy to the cook, who would mutter, *"Men hat dem Mr. Greenberg in d'rerd"* ("To hell with Mr. Greenberg") and then proceed to turn out the nice schnitzel. The cook was a member of De Leon's Socialist Labor party, a Millerite who had no use for the *Forward,* for Ab Cahan its editor, and for capitalists like Mr. Greenberg. But business is business, even for radicals.

THE Hungarian faction, under the leadership of Moishe Goulash, met at Schwartz's Hungarian Café on Rivington Street near Forsythe Street. There they drank coffee, ate Mrs. Schwartz's strudel, and played *klab yash* for matches.

Moishe Goulash was respected on all sides because he had risked his life in the Cause, and as a result suffered from a limp for the rest of his life. He was considered a martyr. In fact all three factions raised enough money to buy him a gold medal, which was presented to Moishe by "Professor" M. Ish Hurwitz ha-Levy himself. The Professor, wearing a golden toga, a white girdle, and a large green turban—the stock costume for Solomon the King—made a long speech comparing Moishe to all the brave Jewish heroes of the ages, pinned the medal on Moishe's well-worn coat, and kissed him on both cheeks. Moishe wept. The next day, being short of funds, Moishe pawned the medal at the Bowery Pawn Shop for ninety-five cents. The medal remained on display in the shop window for many years, and Moishe brought all skeptics to the window to prove his bravery.

It had all started with a nasty trick laid to Izzelle Tzailem-kop, though Izzelle stoutly and no doubt truthfully denied the accusation. Izzelle was employed in a stable right opposite Schreiber's Saloon, which rented out horses to the various theaters when they were needed. On this occasion Boris Tomashefsky, playing the part of Alexander in *The Prince of Jerusalem,* had to sit for some time onstage on his fiery steed (which had pulled an ice wagon all day). The horse was decked in shining armor, the Prince himself naked to the waist and with his famous legs encased in golden tights—his female admirers loved to see him in this semi-nude costume. Tomashefsky was engaged in a long and fiery apostrophe about life in general and nothing in particular when the horse committed a nuisance on the stage. Despite cries of "order, order!" by the more serious-minded, the house burst into hysterical laughter. Tomashefsky, unaware of the cause of the laughter, continued his monologue like the good trouper that he was, but the prompter ordered the curtain lowered on a greatly astonished Prince of Jerusalem. Tomashefsky's only comment was: *"A ferd bleibt a ferd"*—"a horse is just a horse."

This happened in the Thalia Theatre, where Moishe Goulash communed with the muses. Moishe put the blame on Izzelle, charging that Izzy had somehow tampered with the horse, and in retaliation arranged to capture the gallery at the People's Theatre, Izzy's citadel, and disrupt the performance there. In the scramble for seats, Moishe fell over the guard rail into the orchestra below, and from this came his limp.

IZZELLE TZAILEM-KOP'S crowd met and planned their strategy at Sigmund Manilevscu's Café Essex. Sigmund himself was Rumanian, and really favored the Yussel Mameliga group. But he didn't allow sentiment to interfere with business. The Essex Café was adjacent to the Litvak section of the Lower East Side, and only a stone's throw from Izzelle Tzailem-kop's stable.

While Sigmund as a matter of national pride carried mameliga on the menu, he didn't feature it; in his neighborhood, there were few customers for this Rumanian delicacy. *"Vos vaist a chazer fun lokshen?"* he would say, summing up the situation. "Does a pig appreciate noodles?" Could a Litvak appreciate a luscious bowl of mameliga, with sizzling sweet butter, sprinkled generously with pepper cheese? Herring and onions give them. So Sigmund, who felt himself equal to the best chefs in Bucharest, was compelled to cater to the coarse tastes of the Litvaks. He gave them herring in various varieties, hot and cold borsht, steaming *kapusta,* vegetables with sour cream, *schav* with hard boiled egg, potato *latkes,* and tons of pumpernickel. Secretly, Sigmund and his two waiters despised their Litvak customers.

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Always arguing, never agreeing on anything among themselves. Could such cold fish understand the works of Goldfaden? Could they shed a tear at the sufferings of Shulamith, or even understand the side-splitting comedy of the *Tsvai Kune Lemels,* or *Shmendrik?*

Sigmund boiled inwardly when he heard the intellectuals who came to eat his famous twelve-cent seven-course dinner speak of his beloved actors as Purim *shpieler,* and of famous authors like Hurwitz, Latteiner, Zeifer, and Sharkansky as purveyors of trash. Sigmund knew that these critics spoke out of envy: the fact was that all the early playwrights were Rumanians, Bessarabians, and Bukovinians.

Of the galaxy of players who strode the boards of the Yiddish stage in its short period of fame and prosperity, Boris Tomashefsky, though not the greatest, was the most popular. In his teens, when the stage was short of female players, Tomashefsky played women's parts. Later he organized his own troupe and performed in Turn Hall on Fourth Street. His patrioten numbered in the thousands; hysteria, swoonings, shrieks of adoration marked his performances. Every song had to be repeated three or four times; even the long monologues had to be gone through time and again. Tomashefsky's performances often lasted until after one o'clock in the morning.

Tomashefsky had a vibrating, crackling voice, somewhere between baritone and tenor, going into falsetto in the upper ranges. When he sang *"A Brivelle der Mamen"* or *"Oi, die Mameh,"* bleating out the "ma-a me-eh" with all the true Yiddish sentimentality, mothers and children—the whole audience, in short—found it impossible to hold back their tears. No matter what parts he played, no matter if the scene was laid in the hot sandy desert or the Halls of the Inquisition, Tomashefsky always managed to get in a song about Mama.

Tomashefsky played old men and young, villains and romantic heroes, Hasidic rabbis and Cardinal Richelieu, Elisha ben Abuya and Judah Maccabee. Often, in the early days, he appeared on horseback, naked to the waist, with his legs in golden tights—as on the evening that led to Moishe Goulash's martyrdom. The theaters were drafty, and Tomashefsky suffered from continual colds as a result.

In the era when the plays of Jacob Gordin held the stage, Tomashefsky proved that given good parts, he could act. His portrayal of the leading roles in *Got, Mensh, un Teufel,* Gordin's adaptation of Goethe's *Faust,* and in the Yiddish version of Gerhardt Hauptmann's *Die Weber,* probably Gordin's best effort, were exceeded by none.

At one of Tomashefsky's performances of *Bar Kochba,* Moishe Goulash, in alliance with Yussel Mameliga, finally repaid his debt to Izzelle Tzailem-kop. When Tomashefsky, as Bar Kochba, was engaged in one of his usual long monologues on horseback, some traitor set a pail of water behind the drop showing the Gates of Jerusalem. The tired horse, scenting the water, began to neigh loudly, sending the audience into hysterics. This time Tomashefsky cut his speech short and led the horse into the wings. Thus was the Thalia Theatre avenged. That Tomashefsky happened to be the victim of both aggression and retaliation was only incidental.

One of the high lights of those exciting days was the protracted fight between Jacob Gordin and Abraham Cahan, editor of the *Jewish Daily Forward.* By the time the battle was over, the Yiddish stage had entered into its final decline, and even the fine plays of such new writers as Sholem Asch, Perez Hirschbein, S. Anski, and others, could not raise it again.

Yakub Michaelovitch Gordin, as he insisted on being called, arrived in New York in 1891 bringing with him a reputation as an essayist and short story writer both in Russian and Yiddish. In Russia, Gordin had been influenced by the Tolstoyan Brotherhood movement, and he came to America with the intention of founding a Biblical communal settlement. He soon gave up this idea, however, and turned to writing essays and short stories, mainly for the *Arbeiter Zeitung.* Yakub Michaelovitch was an impressive and dignified personality; he took himself seriously and commanded respect. In some of his short stories he was considered the equal of Gorki; by the turn of the century, he was acclaimed as the leader of the Yiddish literary world.

Since Goldfaden, the father of the Yid-

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dish stage, taste had steadily deteriorated, and the migration to America speeded up the process. Audiences demanded, and got, dreadful mixtures of coarse farce, cheap sentiment, and crude rhetoric. *"Shtainer tzugaien zich"*—stones melt—the critics would say in praise of a fine performance. Musicals combined sentimental songs with burlesque-show clowning, and there were even Yiddish chorus girls—though some of the chorus girls were grandmothers.

When Gordin's plays began to appear, many thought they saw the Yiddish theater coming of age. Like Goldfaden, Gordin was largely a borrower and adapter, offering Goethe, Shakespeare, and Ibsen *"ibergezetzt un farbessert"* ("translated and improved"), but his taste was good and his work was serious. If the Yiddish theater ever had a real flowering, it was in Gordin's day. For the first time, producers, authors, and the whole theatrical fraternity began to feel secure. The musicians, the chorus men and women, and the property men formed strong organizations and joined the *Fereinigte Yiddishe Geverkshaften* (Federated Jewish Trades). At the beginning of each theatrical season the unions would allot so and so many musicians, choristers, and property men to each theater, whether they were needed or not. (This system was called "C.O.D.") Even the competition of the Atlantic Garden, right next door to the Thalia Theatre, which boasted the largest organ in the world and offered fine vaudeville for the price of a single glass of beer, if one could outsmart the waiter, became negligible. Hundreds of thousands of new arrivals swelled the ranks of the theater-goers. But is it not written in *Pirke Aboth*: "A name made great destroys itself"? The golden era came to a close in a series of internal quarrels.

Abraham Cahan had aroused the resentment of his *genossen* and literary colleagues by acting the part of a martinet in his capacity as editor.Though an apostle of Marxism, he took a singularly capitalistic attitude towards his newspaper, treating it as a business venture and not simply a forum for the contending philosophies of the East Side. Cahan, it was considered, had become a capitalistic "boss," treating his old comrades as mere hired hands who were to write in accordance with the policy of the editor—a notion until then unheard of in Yiddish intellectual circles. Instead of featuring profound polemics by the outstanding writers of the warring factions, Cahan began to sensationalize the news, used scare headlines, introduced letters to the editor and advice to the troubled, serialized cheap novels, and began to devote much space to the American scene. The *Forward* became an American newspaper, with all the vices and virtues of American sensational journalism.

Outraged staff members protested and were immediately separated from their jobs —like any other heartless capitalist, Cahan fired them! They retaliated by calling Cahan and the remaining staff members renegades and traitors, reactionaries seeking profits, betrayers of the revolution. Since the columns of the *Forward* were closed to them ("Where is free speech?" they clamored in exasperation), they published their clamors in the expiring *Jewish Herald,* soon to go up in flames. And there the naive and sincere Gordin made the mistake of siding with the opposition.

To add fuel to the controversy, Louis Miller, Cahan's mortal political enemy, also sided with the opposition, belaboring Cahan for abandoning the class struggle and selling out world revolution for thirty pieces of silver. Cahan replied that Miller was a liar and a cheat and a windbag, a man capable of poisoning a baby's milk. And Gordin made the final mistake of joining his name to a defense of Miller in the *Jewish Herald.*

CAHAN, who had been among the first to decry the low state of the Jewish theater in its earlier days and to welcome Gordin's plays as a sign of growth, now turned upon Gordin with all his fury. Every time a Gordin play was produced, and they were produced often, Cahan himself wrote a review denouncing the author as a plagiarist, ridiculing the scenes and the dialogue and the players. In issue after issue, he denounced Gordin as a borrower of scenes, dialogue, and whole plays from the moderns and ancients, and compared him unfavorably with such "original" authors as Latteiner, Hurwitz, Jacob Ter (a newcomer to musicals), and others.

Like all dissensions on the East Side, this one spread far and wide, each faction with its own patrioten. Cahan, paradoxically, found himself allied with Kasriel Sarasohn

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and Johan Paley of the orthodox *Yiddishe Tageblatt,* who had been attacking Gordin and his plays for many years as part of their campaign for *taharath ha-mishpocha,* "sanctity of the family." In earlier days, when Abraham Cahan had been a most ardent defender of Gordin's plays, he had written devastating answers to the *Tageblatt*'s attacks.

The Gordin patrioten did not take all this lying down. The destruction of the *Jewish Herald* in a fire left them without newspaper space, but they founded a new weekly, the *Dramatic World,* and in its pages met the vituperations of the anti-Gordinites word for word, crying out against Cahan as a traitor to the proletariat, against the "forces of darkness" represented by the *Tageblatt,* and against Yanovsky of the *Freie Arbeiter Shtimme* for his lukewarmness in the holy cause. The *Dramatic World* contained profound articles by Gordin on the condition of the world, side by side with attacks on Cahan and Paley. Instead of the usual serialized novel, an institution in all Yiddish papers, Gordin published scholarly articles on the history and development of the Greek theater from the Dionysian rites to Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes. The Gordin patrioten, who numbered in the thousands, bought the *Dramatic World* as a duty, though not many understood the scholarly essays. But newspapers had many uses in those days.

Now Cahan began to accuse Gordin of stealing his material for the history of the Greek theater. In the columns of the *Forward* Cahan printed Gordin's views side by side with his source material, mainly from Grote's *History of Greece.* In vain the *Dramatic World* contended that Gordin couldn't have obtained his material first hand, that the matters he dealt with happened twenty-five hundred years ago, that Gordin, like all writers, had to go to source books for material. An innocent quip of Gordin's was twisted into the story that he thought himself as great a writer as Shakespeare. *"Ich und Shakespeare"* became a byword on the East Side.

All this had at last a serious effect on Gordin's popularity, reflected in decreased attendance at his plays and—especially important from a financial viewpoint—a tendency to avoid his plays in arranging organizational benefits for fear that receipts would be endangered. By the time the battle was over, Gordin had been toppled from his pedestal. No more was he Yakub Michaelovitch, but plain Jacob Gordin. Soon he went into decline, and with him the Yiddish stage—back to Latteiner and Hurwitz, and worse. Perhaps Cahan felt no pride in his victory; his autobiography, published many years after this battle, speaks highly of Gordin and makes no mention of the controversy.

But the most colorful personality in the Yiddish theater of those early days was "Professor" M. Ish Hurwitz ha-Levy. Moishelle, as he was called by his intimates, was from 1880 to 1886 an actor in Abraham Goldfaden's troupe playing in Odessa, Bessarabia, and the Ukraine, and later, when the Yiddish theater was outlawed in Russia, in Jassy and other towns in Rumania. Moishelle was a poor actor, but had a flair for writing, and in 1886, when the company came to America without Goldfaden, he became its official playwright. After some months of legal difficulties, the troupe opened in an abandoned burlesque theater on the Bowery near Grand Street, which they cleaned up and renamed the Rumanian Opera House; later they moved to the Windsor Theatre, lower down on the Bowery.

Moishelle wrote romantic plays, historical plays, topical plays, and musicals. Sometimes he wrote them overnight. The nightly change of play was a great burden on any author; even the backlog of Goldfaden plays and the occasional play from an outside author did not suffice. Moishelle wrote *Shabsei Tzvi* one week, *The Johnstown Flood* the next week, and *The Rambam* during a third week. Despite the varying titles, almost all the plays had the usual songs about home and mama, and so-called Hasidic dances by the lumbering chorus. One of Moishelle's most popular productions at the Windsor Theatre was the musical *Blumele* in which the famous song *"Chossen Kalla Mazel Tov"* was first rendered.

Quite frequently, one of Moishelle's masterpieces went into performance with the fourth act still unwritten, Moishelle promising to have it ready before the end of the third. (Plays more often than not were per-

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formed without rehearsal, the cast depending on the prompter for dialogue and direction.) If the fourth act was not forthcoming, Moishelle would dress up as Maimonides or King Solomon, and with the rest of the troupe also dressed in exotic costumes surrounding him on the stage, would declaim lengthy philosophic monologues on the ills of the world, stopping only when he ran out of breath; then some specialty act would take over, until Moishelle, refreshed with some cold seltzer, was ready to continue. This would go on until midnight, the usual hour for the finale. Then the whole assembly would sing a Psalm, or some other suitable song, and the audience would go home —by that time they had forgotten what had happened in the first three acts and went home happy. After all, the play did last till midnight.

Moishelle loved pomp and splendor and the good things of life, and tried his best to live the life of a nobleman. Often when the troupe had hardly enough money to subsist on, Moishelle would raid the treasury, rent himself a carriage with two fiery horses and a footman in livery, and go driving through Central Park, like some Viennese aristocrat driving out on the Prater. In his patent leather shoes, tight-fitting suits, and black homburg, carrying an elegant cane, he was the best-dressed man in Schreiber's Saloon and the best customer that Yachnin's, the sporting haberdashery on Canal Street, ever had.

Moishelle took up at one time with a man named Schneuer, who operated a fancy barber shop for sailors on Pike Slip, near the water front. Schneuer worshipped the theater in general and Moishelle in particular. He spoke only *Deitchmerish,* was the official author of all amateur theatricals, and the financial angel behind most of them. The story goes that in casting the very first amateur show, Moishelle handed out all the parts, and there was none for Schneuer.

"Schneuer, can you read?" asked Moishelle.

"No."

"Can you write?"

"No."

"Fine," said Moishelle, rubbing his hands, "I have just the part for you. You will be the author."

From then on Schneuer's name was on all amateur show programs as the official author. Schneuer also paid for the printing of all programs. He also covered all deficits, even though the amateur players paid for their parts and their relatives and friends crowded Turn Hall to overflowing. Moishelle never trusted anyone; he was always treasurer.

MOISHELLE'S extravagance and constant need of money led to the founding of the Harp of David Insurance Lodge, the Lower East Side's great South Sea Bubble. Moishelle, Schreiber, and Schneuer were the organizers and charter members, Moishelle, of course, being president and treasurer. The Harp of David Insurance Lodge issued no written policies to its members, neither did it keep books. For the price of two dollars in hand, paid to Professor M. Ish Hurwitz ha-Levy, treasurer, this being the only and final payment, the Lodge gave its members two theater tickets, and in addition promised to pay seven dollars a week sick benefit (time unlimited), a $500 dowry for the daughter of any paid-up member (daughters unlimited), and a $500 death benefit.

What Jew doesn't know a bargain when it is offered him? Hundreds of two-dollar payments began to flow into the hands of the treasurer. As a promotion stunt, Moishelle visited the meetings of *chevras,* lodges, and *landsmanshaften,* dressed up as the Sultan of Turkey and accompanied by the chorus from his theater; the chorus intoned Psalms, while Moishelle harangued the members on the virtues of the Harp of David Insurance Lodge.

As a climax to the sales campaign, Moishelle arranged a parade. Two thousand members assembled on Rutgers Square. The combined orchestras and male choristers of the Yiddish theaters (all insured by the Lodge) volunteered their services; the three groups of patrioten, headed by their leaders, swelled the crowd. Behind the escort of police came the grand marshal of the parade, President and Treasurer Professor M. Ish Hurwitz ha-Levy, resplendent on a prancing steed, a wide red satin grand marshal's sash across his chest, a ten-gallon green turban on his head, a marshal's baton in his right hand. Two patrioten dressed in livery, with turbans, led his horse. At a respectful distance behind the grand marshal came his

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two grand viziers, Messrs. Schreiber and Schneuer, in a horse-drawn carriage driven by a footman in livery. (The two grand viziers were afraid to ride on horses.)

The combined bands played Sousa marches, while the combined choristers tried to outshout them with the popular Yiddish songs of the day. The grand marshal led the parade up Canal Street to Christie Street, then north on Christie Street to Houston Street, then east to Attorney Street, south to Grand Street, west to Essex, and back to Rutgers Square. There the combined bands and choristers gave a *"kontzert,"* and for one hour the Professor spoke to the assembled crowds on the uncertainties of life, painting harrowing scenes of widows and orphans left penniless, young women doomed to spinsterhood because of the lack of dowry, families of the sick hungering because of the lack of sick benefits.

During the following weeks thousands of dollars flowed into the treasury. As became the president and treasurer of an insurance company, Moishelle bought himself a fine house, fine clothes, an expensive carriage with two horses, and hired a liveried coachman. With characteristic generosity he helped out all his needy friends and acquaintances, and they were many. Neither Schreiber nor Schneuer, his grand viziers, could get so much as a glimpse of the money.

But soon the benefit claims began to flow in, mainly for the $500 dowry payments. Suddenly it seemed that all the *shadchonim* on the East Side were doing a land-office business, arranging marriages for the daughters of members of the Insurance Lodge. Every member had numbers of marriageable daughters. The less scrupulous rang in their unmarried sisters, and even cousins. Confirmed bachelors of ancient vintage began to think of settling down. All the wedding halls on the East Side were dated up for months ahead, printers were busy printing invitations, empty stores were being gobbled up, every corner on the East Side was a prospective soda-water stand—all dependent, of course, on the payment of claims by the Harp of David Insurance Lodge.

Claims exceeded the total membership payments by thousand of dollars, and in any case the money had been used up in the salary and other expenses of the president-treasurer. Marriages were cancelled, business contracts voided. Lawyers reaped a harvest of suits for breach of promise and breach of contract.

But before long the excitement subsided; most of the defrauded began to reflect that after all they had received two theater tickets for their two dollars. So they teased each other in good humor, and flocked once again to see the Professor's masterpieces.

Moishelle's two innocent accomplices, Schreiber and Schneuer, were looked upon as cheats and robbers for many years thereafter, but Professor M. Ish Hurwitz ha-Levy, being a glamorous personality with the accepted irresponsibility of the theatrical profession, was soon forgiven. He assured everyone that he was a victim of circumstances, and to all hints of repayment he had one reply: *"Geht nemt blut fun a shtain"* —"go get blood from a stone."

Perhaps this unanswerable challenge may serve also as a reply to those who complain of the low state to which the Yiddish theater has fallen since the days of Boris Tomashefsky and Jacob Gordin.

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WHERE JOURNALISM MUST DRAW THE LINE

A European Reacts to Collier's "The War We Do Not Want"

ANDRÉ PRUDHOMMEAUX

HOMER expressed the rather revolting notion that the wars and ills of mankind are the raw material of poetry and, consequently, of that poetic pleasure which is the supreme delight of the gods. In this sentiment we detect the first symptoms of that professional deformation which makes journalists greet a juicy crime or an international crisis with joy, and which makes their readers eagerly look forward to blood on the front page.

Still, we must also take into account the cathartic function that art had for Homer, even if he is a little too self-conscious about being the one who, after the event, transmutes massacres into beauty, and human suffering into an enjoyment that, thanks to the poet, is not reserved for the gods. Moreover, there is an extenuating circumstance here, in that the poetic treatment of human misfortune is confined to events that have already happened—and constitutes the revenge taken, after the fact, by intelligence and sensibility on the blind and inscrutable Fate which is a closed book for the gods themselves. Homer does not at all invite men to enjoy the story of future wars; and it is by this token that he remains for us a citizen of our world, a civilized person. For one of the tacit and essential conventions of "civilization" is that the future belongs to nobody, that reality should not be staged in advance: for Nero to burn Rome simply to provide himself with a literary subject seems to us the very symbol of barbarity.

Civilized good taste has regarded speculation about the future as proper only in the detached, remote, and schematic form of an apocalypse or a utopia; and has barred, as essentially inhuman, any factual, realistic description of a future that involves us and depends on what we ourselves do. The vision of the future as expressed in either apocalypse or utopia pertains to an ultimate end, the end of history, and the unreality of that end is obvious to the living. But the day when a television camera man waits in ambush on a ledge in order to present us with the possible spectacle of a workman falling off a roof—on that day something irreparable will have happened, since it will then take only an infinitesimal psychological step to actually provoking the workman's fall. Therefore it is real cause for scandal when a magazine, having apparently exhausted the means of attracting readers that current events and free-floating fantasy offer it, tries to cash in, in advance, on the terrors and massacres of tomorrow, borrowing details from future holocausts with which to stage a sensational spectacle, and extracting morbid entertainment from a drama that still lies in the womb of time.

I AM well aware that *Collier's* venture ("Preview of the War We Do Not Want," October 27, 1951) was armed with handy pre-

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WHEN that sensational issue of *Collier's* came out on October 27, 1951, in which articles by prominent writers described the course of World War III as if it had already taken place, there was a roar of outrage. Though the issue was titled "The War We Do Not Want," it seemed to most observers that quite an opposite impression would be conveyed, especially to the peoples of Europe and Asia. There was a general feeling that the magazine had somehow committed an unpardonable offense, though few seemed inclined to judge it in terms other than *Realpolitik:* it would dishearten Europeans, frighten Asiatics, etc. Here, ANDRÉ PRUDHOMMEAUX gives one European's reaction to the *Collier's* episode, not as it affects the strategy of the cold war, but as it involves certain values intrinsic to Western civilization that contemporary journalism appears willing to dispense with. This article is translated from the French by Waldemar Hansen.

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texts, such as that it was meant as a warning addressed to everybody, friend and foe alike; and those responsible may also have felt subconsciously justified by the popular superstition to the effect that once an evil event has been foreseen, a kind of preventive magic insures that it can't actually happen. For all that, the project is nonetheless revealing of how barbarism has entered ethical and aesthetic fields where certain norms used to prevail. Worse yet, it reveals the unconsciousness with which these norms can be violated by certain members of the intellectual elite in the West—for there were a number of the most respectable names involved in this piece of literary degradation.

Although many voices were raised in censure of *Collier's,* I listened in vain for the note I was waiting for: a condemnation in the name of the essential aesthetic basis of civilized life. The rules that separate reality from fiction, art from nature, the thing from its representation, style from crude fact, form from substance, subject from object—it is these rules alone that sanction and govern the adventure of being human, and in this case they were obviously violated. A total failure to recognize distinctions abolishes all values by abolishing that which irreducibly distinguishes one value from another. And, indeed, life is stripped naked of all meaning when one is confronted by these pages, where scenes of *future* carnage, *future* victory, and *future* demoralization—conjured up with the heightened caricature of comic strips, with the super-real, gaudy trappings of technicolor and the glare of flood-lighting, with all the minute details of a wax museum —alternate with advertisements, more real than life, that present the fetishistic objects of American culture: automobiles, frigidaires, whiskey, beauty soap, deodorants, depilatories, sanitary napkins, and life insurance. . . . On one page, Philadelphia is atom-bombed; but on the opposite page, in an ad, a beaming, smiling model upholds the only tooth powder that hardens the gums; the inmates of Siberian prison camps revolt; the musical comedy *A Thousand Guys and Girls* is playing at the Moscow State Theater —and everything winds up with a free handout of nylon stockings.

Nor is this sensational and grotesque farce improbable or unrealistic, either: there is always "business as usual," and the true music of war is usually made up of such discordant notes. But in this case the unforgivable crime was to try to monopolize the future, the hopes and private dreams of men alive today; the unpardonable thing was to offer them, on the one hand, the hope of being loved or of being happy—symbolized by shampoo and electric ranges—and then to mix this with the murder of one half of the world by the other half, and the unconditional surrender of humanity to blind history.

As though this weren't enough, the hypothetical nightmare is given a blatant veneer to make it seem like actuality, like crude reality itself. On this level, *Collier's* is unprecedented. When Captain Danrit, in France back in the 1880's, described the *War of Tomorrow* in thirty-two illustrated volumes, the naive, utopian, absurdly optimistic character of his bayonet battles, cavalry charges, balloons grappling in mid-air, and naval victories with warships ramming each other—all this looked like Jules Verne and his school; moreover, Danrit took good care not to use real names, not even his own. When the French magazine *Vu* published an issue anticipating poison-gas warfare, the gas masks guaranteed that the entire *dramatis personae* would remain as anonymous as robots; and the whole issue amounted to little more than statistics on the number of quarts of poison that would be necessary to wipe out all life in a square city mile. In short, both publications could offer the excuse of being a kind of didactic outline with practical aims: the one setting forth the virtues of a new and joyous kind of warfare, the other tending to mock a perfectly mechanical and stupid massacre. *Collier's had no aim.* Neither sincerely warlike nor authentically pacifist, the issue was a pure circulation and advertising stunt, a spectacular and technocratic expression of contemporary nihilism.

This can be seen from the way in which

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the odds and ends and rubbish of the present were juggled to make them fit into *Collier's* museum of horrors. The refinement of detail was like that in an exhibition of wax figures, on which real teeth, hair, and even skin are used. The details belonged to a *tableau vivant:* some of the actors would appear to be real corpses, others dolls, and others tortured criminals about to die, or their torturers themselves—all simply obeying the command to hold the pose. One thinks of those late Roman spectacles in which slaves declaimed the roles of Hercules or Oedipus and were then burned alive at a real stake, or were actually blinded in the last act.

IF MEMORY serves me right, there was a documentary film on Africa in which a native fled before a lion, was caught, torn apart, and authentically eaten; and meanwhile the whole scene was calmly filmed, later to be projected on public movie screens. The general idea was that this was supposed to be a "tragic accident" occurring suddenly in the course of a hunt, but one had the strong impression of its having been premeditated by the white *b'wana* who, when he spotted some game, sent the young native to get his rifle. In any case, the mere fact of seeing the camera passively follow, through its lens, the victim's final desperate spurt from death, was enough to make any spectator feel like the accomplice of a murder. What is one man more or less on a dangerous expedition, when so many die without ever having a camera there to give them new life on the screen? The nihilist perhaps would say something like that; but any civilized man—and I am thinking now, above all, of the dead man's relatives and fellow tribesmen—knows only too well that "it isn't the same thing."

There are limits to human pastime, limits that are those of civilization itself. Aesop isn't played by a hunchback in our theaters, nor Philoctetes by a cripple. Any element of reality, brutally injected into a fiction, kills art and causes nothingness and darkness to explode in the midst of the world of forms that makes up culture. The man who puts a single lock of real hair in a portrait, or makes a war movie with a real dead horse in it, swollen, its hoofs in the air; the man who exhibits a true monster in a side show, who shows death masks together with sculpture, who nails a living man in the form of a cross on some processional crucifix; the man who cheats in terms of creation and truth—that man does something more than kill his own work: he kills faith in the human venture and in its profoundest rules. He brings the death of society just as surely as though he held between his fingers the fuse that would plunge it into darkness and chaos.

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WHEN SECULARISM CAME TO RUSSIAN JEWRY

Even in the Old Country the Process Had Gone Far

HERBERT PARZEN

A LEGEND has been created by the spiritual leaders of what is the largest section of American Jewry—made up of those who came here in the second great wave of immigration, or their descendants. The legend is a labor of love and nostalgia, but hardly of authentic knowledge; fond, idealized recollection has gone into it, fed not a little by the needs of group pride and recognition—also by a large amount of sheer ignorance. The name of the legend is "The East European Jew."

Unhappy over the nature and prospects of Jewish life in America, many rabbis and journalists have projected the wishful picture of a kind of holy, integral Jewish life, untainted by modernism, that is supposed to have been lived by our fathers in Eastern Europe. Against this, they point up what they claim is the disintegration and emptiness of present-day American Jewish life. By dint of repetition and accumulation and embroidery of sentimental details, wide acceptance has been won for that picture, so that today many Jews—thinking Jews—have become homesick for a home they never knew. And the fact that the true original of that picture has been destroyed, and destroyed horribly, has only made their nostalgia more intense.

WHAT do we see in this picture of East European Jewry? We see that all Jews were devout, that they lived in wholehearted conformance with the Shulhan Aruch, and were entirely dedicated to God and the Torah. Despite poverty and persecution, they lived serenely, even happily, prizing spiritual values more than material satisfactions, snug within a tradition that gave each individual self-fulfillment. They could thus remain indifferent to secularism and science, social and political innovations, and material improvements. In sum, the Jews of East Europe were immune to modernism because they were fully content with their traditional Orthodoxy.

The pendant of this picture shows the change these same Jews or their descendants underwent on American soil. Exposed to a materialistic environment and unsettled by the institutions developed by the earlier Jewish immigration from Central Europe, they abandoned their traditions, broke with their old religious practices, to become complete materialists, expending their abundant and unique energies in pursuit of the things of this world. They would not even provide decent Jewish educations for their children. True, there were some exceptions among them, devout men who tried to stem the tide and founded *shulen* in which custom and tradition were scrupulously maintained. But the rest, if they helped to build and maintain synagogues, did so only as a vicarious atonement for their betrayal of the old, true values.

IT IS a rare man who can see the true character of his ancestors clearly, and it is perhaps even rarer for a people to have a true notion of its own past. Rabbi HERBERT PARZEN here argues that our prevailing conception of the lives of our fathers and grandfathers in Eastern Europe is more mythical than true; that we have taken one side of this life—its piety, its unity, its devotion to tradition and the Law—and have ignored another significant element—its growing attraction to the values of the Enlightenment, its diversity, and its rejection of tradition and the Law. His thesis has significant bearing on the oft-expressed belief that the "old-time Judaism" was destroyed by the hostile modernity that America impressed upon the immigrant. Rabbi Parzen is director of programs for the United Synagogue of America. He was born in Poland, and holds degrees from the University of Michigan, Columbia, and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

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BOTH panels of this legendary picture, with variations of shading and emphasis, have come to be accepted as faithful versions of the truth. The fact is that at least one of the two is downright incorrect, uninformed, and unhistorical. In some respects, indeed, modern forces had a more upsetting effect on the Jews of Eastern than those of Central Europe. For the Enlightenment (in Hebrew, the *Haskalah*), with its faith in reason and individual conscience, and its opposition to rabbinic authority and the Synagogue, came to them far more suddenly, allowing no time for gradual readjustment. It rose on their horizon in the 19th century, fully formed and triumphant after three hundred years of gradual growth in the West, during which Jew and Slav alike had continued to live in the Middle Ages, largely unaware of what was happening elsewhere.

What had happened in the West happened again in the East. Assimilation, often meretricious, often servile, spread; apostasy took its toll. But because of the special conditions under which Eastern Jews lived, Enlightenment also produced some different effects. In the East, revolutionary politics attracted the new Jewish intellectuals; also nationalism in various forms; a Yiddish literature was created, and a Hebrew one revived in secular garb. All these developments were, however, remote from traditional Jewish practices and beliefs. Long before Hitler, the question of the dominance of *traditional* Judaism hung in the balance in the very heartland of East European Jewry.

Since the conditions of Eastern Jewish life constituted so massive a resistance to modernism, the fact that this resistance was in so many respects overcome by the end of the third decade of the 20th century is testimony to how attractive modern, Western culture was to the Jews of Eastern Europe, and also shows how vulnerable their traditional culture had really become.

The very size of the Jewish population was a primary factor in slowing the spread of new ideas in the Pale; Jews were shielded from outside influences by their own numbers and density. Another factor was the ingrown character of a way of life that for over a thousand years had been spiritually isolated from its social and political environment, and dependent largely on religious tradition for the content of its culture.

Economic circumstances too acted to keep the Jewish social order and way of life intact for a much longer time in Eastern Europe. Before the last decades of the 19th century, modern capitalist enterprise and industrialism had hardly struck root. The slow tempo of a pre-industrial life afforded leisure for an existence filled with ritual observance, especially in the small towns and villages. Furthermore, being concentrated occupationally almost entirely in petty trade and the crafts, Jews were as a rule masters of their own time. And since they made up the bulk of the urban and rural middle class and practically monopolized commercial affairs wherever they were thickly settled, they were able to carry on business almost exclusively with fellow Jews, who observed the same ritual schedule, or with peasants, who accommodated their hours of buying and selling to those of the middlemen. And so, in East Europe, one could fulfill all 613 precepts of the Shulhan Aruch, and devote much time to other forms of worship, and to study, without affecting one's livelihood.

LAST, but far from least, there was the political regime under which most of the Jews of East Europe lived. The Jewish policies of the czars, contrary to the very purpose for which they were adopted, significantly helped maintain Jewish traditionalism.

The czars were inveterately hostile to the Jews and tried to restrict their numbers inside Russia to a minimum. When the empire was extended westward to embrace the densest areas of Jewish settlement, in Poland, Lithuania, the Ukraine, and elsewhere, Jews were still prohibited from traveling or settling within the borders of Russia proper without special permission. The "Pale of Settlement" was established in the conquered territories, and there the Jews lived as in a vast ghetto. And from the time of the defeat of Napoleon in 1812 to the Revolution of

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1917 their legal and political situation deteriorated progressively. Nicholas I and his successors—except for Alexander II during a few liberal years—followed a policy of persecution, consistently and zealously. Veiled at first by terms like "educational" and "correctional," this policy was openly avowed later on, and during the last decades of the 19th century the czarist government went to the point of declaring publicly and officially that there was no place for Jews inside Russia's borders. It was envisaged, or hoped—in Pobyedonostzev's famous formulation—that a third of Russia's Jews would be converted, another third would emigrate, and that the rest would "die out."

Nicholas I sought to "educate" his Jewish subjects by injecting modern methods and secular studies into their educational system. Coming under such auspices and with such an aim, little wonder that the Jews feared—and later events proved them correct—that all this fine talk was but an opening wedge to the actual conversion of their children. They resisted and sabotaged the plan; the czarist government then issued a series of "correctional" ukases; special economic restraints and tax burdens were imposed on Jews; measures were taken to destroy Jewish communal organizations; and young Jews were condemned to "correctional" military service. At the same time, however, they remained largely excluded from public institutions of learning, including the universities (except during the brief period of Alexander II's liberalism).

Thus, Western culture first came to the Jews of East Europe as a threat to their very existence as Jews, not as something liberating and life-enhancing. And that some of the first proselytes of the Enlightenment prostrated themselves before the czarist officials, begging them to use police measures to compel the modernization of their fellow Jews, could only further prejudice its case. Loyalty to tradition became a test of Jewish self-respect. Even so, we know, on very reliable testimony, that by the fifth decade of the last century there were groups of *Maskilim* ("enlightened ones") in almost every Jewish community in the Russian Empire. The historical forces on the side of modernity, as well as its own genuine values, were too strong to be checked by either the czars or the Jews themselves.

How ripe many Jewish scholars and rabbinic intellectuals had become for enlightenment by the middle of the 19th century is shown in events during Alexander II's famous liberal decade. Between 1856 and 1866, the government began to encourage Jews to attend its official institutions of higher learning, opened careers all over the empire to Jewish graduates, and held out hope of general social and political emancipation. It is very significant in the present context that Russian Jewry reacted to these progressive policies in very much the same way as the Jews of the West had when offered similar opportunities. They flocked to the Gymnasia, technical schools, and universities; deserted the synagogues, abandoned ghetto dress and speech, ghetto manners and fashions. They took pride in their "Russification," and some even became apostates. Many, on the other hand, preserving a minimal loyalty to their traditional moorings, threw their energies and abilities into the Haskalah movement.

All this disappeared as though it had been a dream when, around 1867, the czar reverted to his old reactionary policies. The new rights of educated Jews were gradually withdrawn in almost their entirety; the higher schools again closed their doors to Jewish students. But Alexander II had loosed forces in the Jewish community that he and his successors were powerless to control. Despite all official obstacles and all sacrifices, Jews went on acquiring modern, secular educations—and this at the cost of a superhuman tenacity, for even when admitted to the higher schools they were subjected to much more difficult and exacting standards than their fellow students. Many of them solved the problem by going to universities abroad; these Jews, whether they returned or remained, abandoned the traditional life and became for the most part disciples of the

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various Russian revolutionary movements, or of various Zionist and other movements of Jewish national liberation.

THE leaders of the traditional forces in Russian Jewry did not sit idly by while all this was going on. In their struggle against modernism they went to lengths for which there was hardly any precedent in Jewish tradition itself, condemning the learning of any language other than Hebrew and Yiddish, and the very reading of modern literature no matter what the language.

The farsighted among the Orthodox resorted, however, to more intellectual weapons. A new Yeshiva was established in Telz in 1870, to counteract the inroads of the Haskalah among the intellectually inclined Jewish youth: it set up new teaching techniques, including the study of *Musar*—ethical and pietistic literature—in an effort to inspire its students with a new enthusiasm for tradition. This effort was influenced by the rising Moralist movement, which, under the leadership of the famous Rabbi Israel Salanter (1810-83), attempted to breathe fresh life into the forms and principles of the Synagogue and to give all Jews, learned and unlearned, spiritual incentives that would lift them above the squalor and degradation of their physical environment.

The Moralist or *Musar* movement turned out to be Orthodoxy's most important counter-move to the Enlightenment. It emphasized that man's feelings as well as his reason must be cultivated, and it revived the study of the moralistic writings of the medieval sages, not simply for the sake of edification and intellectual exercise but also for practical guidance in personal and social life. It encouraged a certain asceticism among its followers, and became in essence a law within the Law—described in rabbinic lore as *"lifnim meshurat hadin"*—that required the Jew to do more than was literally prescribed.

The Musar movement was fundamentally opposed to the Haskalah; but while it urged a renewed and more ardent devotion to tradition and tried to develop a religious philosophy based on a nice adjustment between reason and emotion within the framework of the Synagogue, it also endeavored, in its own way, to satisfy the growing need of Jews for wider horizons of culture and experience. And to some extent it did succeed in doing this by emphasizing the altruistic ideal of a Jewish personality wholly devoted to working for the general welfare.

Rabbi Salanter and his disciples were thus able for a time to stem the tide. Kovno, which was reputed to be the "most modern community in Lithuania" in 1849 when Salanter came to it, was left by him twenty years later a fortress of Orthodoxy. But he had come too late; his temporary victory only proved the strength of Jewish modernism; the forces behind the Haskalah could not be stemmed by one man, however saintly and however capable of revivifying tradition —and no matter to what extent he could exploit the identification of Jewish Enlightenment with ultimate apostasy. Salanter himself must have recognized the handwriting on the wall, for he actually went on record in favor of secular education for Jews in the West, and founded his opposition to it in the East only on his conviction that the secular Jewish schools sponsored by the Russian government were engines for the destruction of Judaism.

THE struggle to westernize Jewish education was begun in Hebrew, which was at the time the language of all lettered Jews. Later, particularly after Alexander II's liberal decade, Russian served as the vehicle in which the more assimilated Russian Jews propounded their diverse answers to the Jewish "question"; still later on, Russian was also used, paradoxically, to win assimilated Jews over to Jewish nationalism.

However, it was Yiddish, the tongue of the majority, with Hebrew not far behind, that became the chief vehicle of popular enlightenment in the end. Not unimportant in the creation of the myth of the East European Jew among his descendants in America is the latter's ignorance of the fact that Yiddish had actually become the main linguistic means of propagating new, and un-

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traditional—indeed non-Jewish—ideas among East European Jews, and that renascent Hebrew also served the same end. The American Jew still thinks of Yiddish and Hebrew literature as traditional and authentically Jewish, and is unaware of the fact that while East European Jewish culture continued to be Jewish in language, it began to be increasingly non-Jewish and indeed anti-Jewish in content.

A modern literature, in Hebrew and Yiddish, sprang up and began to open the windows of the stifling Pale wider and wider to the currents of air astir in the Western world; the problems and ideals of Western civilization pressed in upon the Jewish consciousness, unsettled and aroused it. Dissatisfaction with the ghetto environment in all its aspects grew, and, with it, opposition to the social and religious status quo.

The Jews in whom this dissatisfaction was liveliest and most conscious split into two bodies of opinion. One was animated by the desire for absorption into the dominant society, and among these Jews there were intermarriages and even apostasy. Largely, the Jews of this group put their hope in the new revolutionary movements agitating the czarist empire in the last half of the 19th century; they felt that the overthrow of the czars, with the resultant social and political changes, would automatically solve the "Jewish question."

The adherents of the other group, educated by neo-Hebraic literature for the most part, were more Jewish-centered in their interests and saw the liberation of Jewish life from ghetto wretchedness and the modernization of its culture as goals sufficient in themselves for the time being. These Jews, the direct heirs of the early Haskalah, had as their first program a minimal Judaism expressed in the slogan: "Be Jews at home and men on the street." Some of them, among whom were scholars and rabbis, had tried without success to persuade the Synagogue to modify its attitude of obdurate authoritarianism. When their effort served only to stiffen its hostility, they became that much the more alienated from the Synagogue, the more inclined toward humanism and secularism. Others concerned themselves little with the official religious authorities, formulating independent conceptions of Judaism.

HETEROGENEOUS as these partisans of enlightenment were in other respects, they were at one in their revolt against the Synagogue, which became increasingly identified with all that was backward in the ghetto and its mentality, and with all that defended that backwardness. Regardless of their different programs for the reform of Jewish life, the enlighteners were unanimous in repudiating the Shulhan Aruch as the regulator of Jewish existence and the rabbinically controlled community as the authoritative center of Jewish life. The new Hebrew and Yiddish literatures were predominantly secularist and anti-religious in tone—certainly outrightly anti-rabbinic insofar as they sought "emancipation" from the Jewish religion as then practiced.

The sad fact was that, with the distinctive exception of Salanter and his disciples, the Orthodox Synagogue during the 19th century showed itself incapable of offering anything fresh and creative in its effort to dam the tide of modernism and maintain its authority. At the same time, the so-called "German" synagogues in large cities like Warsaw and Lodz, being antipathetic to the psychology and ideals of any Jew with real roots in the community, could win no more than minor importance either in influence or number of members. Thus, enlightened Jews with religious convictions had no religious institution to turn to.

Hence everything that had to do with the social and cultural renovation of Jewish life in East Europe was left in secularist hands. Almost every notable personality who shaped the new Jewish life and its culture—Sholom Aleichem, Ahad Ha'am, Peretz, Bialik, Tschernichowsky, Berdichevsky, Dubnow—from the last decades of the 19th century on was outside the existent Synagogue, unsympathetic to rabbinical authority, and in no sense an Orthodox Jew. Chaim Tchernowitz ("Rav Tsair") was perhaps the sole excep-

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tion; he too, however, was hardly Orthodox in ideology. By the end of the last century, the Synagogue had come to be regarded as a negligible factor, not only by the radicals who abhorred religion on principle, but by the nationalists and bourgeois assimilationists. Even those who led the struggle for a Jewish national reawakening were, for the most part, secularist; many among them revered Jewish tradition but refused to abide by the Synagogue's interpretation of it. If our reading of history is correct, that "secularization of the leadership" of the Jewish masses which is now typical of the Diaspora and Israel alike was already pretty well manifest in the Russian Pale.

It is worth underlining that Jewish nationalism itself, reasserting a primary Jewish loyalty, no less than Jewish radicalism, in which Jewishness took at most a second place, had its inception among the disciples of enlightenment. Political Zionism, with Hebrew as its language, was first conceived among the Maskilim. And though fashioned out of religious and traditionalist aspirations, Zionism was even in those days essentially a modern national movement of a kind that was indifferent to or competed with religion. Its first leaders were at the very least estranged from the Synagogue, and Zionism has always remained "neutral" in religious matters, if not completely unconcerned. It very early became necessary to have a special, religious Zionist party, the Mizrachi, to represent traditional elements who otherwise would have found it impossible to identify themselves with the movement.

Even more estranged from the Synagogue was the Folkist movement which the historian S. M. Dubnow founded at the turn of the century, and which was chiefly recruited from forward-looking middle-class Jews with a sprinkling of intellectuals. This party, a political force in Poland between 1918 and 1939, demanded cultural autonomy for the Jewish people wherever they were gathered in large numbers. Like the radical Jewish parties, the Folkists were oriented toward Yiddish as the true language of the people, and Yiddish literature as embodying their most real and intimate sentiments.

The socialist Bund, made up of workers and intellectuals, was opposed to the Synagogue for the same and other reasons—reasons grounded in Marxist ideology. This also applied to the Poale Zion, the socialist wing of the Zionist movement that was founded in 1905 by a dissident fraction of the Bund and became the forerunner and progenitor of the Histadrut development.

True, these political groups never embraced an actual majority of the Jews in East Europe, but the historical record shows that they furnished what were undeniably the most creative and dynamic elements of Jewish public life during the half-century following 1890.

Even at that, the Jews of East Europe were not exposed to the full stream and power of secular, modernizing, and assimilatory forces until after 1918. For in the newly created Polish state, containing a full half of Eastern Europe's Jews, no small effort was made to transform the Jews into citizens on the Western model by the reactionary and anti-Semitic military clique in control of the country.

Ironically, Poland's rulers turned to the upholders of the religious tradition for their instrument toward this end—the secularized Jews were, after all, socialist or nationalist, and as such confirmed opponents of the regime. The Agudas Yisrael, created when the Hasidim and their opponents, the Mitnagdim, joined together to oppose secularism, was the only organized Jewish group that maintained relatively satisfactory relations with the government of independent pre-war Poland. It received the bulk of the rather small funds which that government appropriated for Jewish education, and in return it scrupulously conformed to the educational standards and policies prescribed by the Polish ministry of education. The incidental result was a tremendous revolution in Orthodox educational practice.

The Agudah continued to maintain traditional *chedarim* and *yeshivoth* in its school

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system for boys, known as the Horev schools. But in a large proportion of its schools—that is, those receiving government support—from twelve to fourteen hours a week were set aside for instruction in secular subjects in the Polish language, as over against from eighteen to twenty-two hours for Jewish and religious studies. This was a very revolutionary step for Orthodox Jews; equally radical was the founding of the Beth Jacob schools for girls, with a curriculum much the same as that of the Horev. By 1937 these girls' schools had an enrollment of 35,000 students, and there is evidence that the Agudah planned to spread these reforms to its *chedarim* and smaller *yeshivoth* as soon as finances would permit, and also to introduce the study of the natural sciences in the higher *yeshivoth*.

What effect these changes would have had on the life of Polish Jewry in the long run will never now be known. Orthodoxy's reversal of attitude toward women's education was perhaps as promising of far-reaching consequences as its new tolerance of secular learning as such. It is part of the larger Jewish tragedy in East Europe that these new developments were killed in the bud by Hitler. What remains, nevertheless, is the historical fact that the old educational policy of the Synagogue in Eastern Europe had for the first time been radically revised—and to the same extent, more or less, as advocated by the early Maskilim.

Elsewhere the stream of secularization ran much more swiftly. The Yavne schools, administered by the Orthodox Zionist Mizrachi, instituted secular courses with an emphasis on Jewish nationalism and Palestine, in addition to the prescribed religious subjects. The Tarbut system of schools, Zionist in inspiration and backing, were secular Hebrew schools in which Zionism and Palestine formed the nucleus of the curriculum. The Cysho schools, founded and financed by the Bund, were secular Yiddish schools with a socialist orientation. All three of these private educational systems were in essence the organs of political parties, and as such they saw it as part of their function to orient students towards the ideologies of their respective sponsors.

The great majority of Polish Jews, however, sent their children to the free public schools since they could not afford the tuition fees of the private Jewish school systems. The entire curriculum of the public schools was designed to create citizens who identified themselves with the Polish nation and state. Jewish children had the opportunity to attend exclusively Jewish public schools, open on Sunday and closed on Saturday, and providing four hours a week for Jewish cultural and religious subjects.

An important inducement impelling many Polish Jews to send their children to the public schools was the Polish government's practice of giving public school graduates preference in admission to its institutions of higher learning. Moreover, in many towns, especially the smaller ones, there were no private Jewish schools. Not least, many Jews were without specific political convictions so far as Jewish life was concerned and, unable to decide among the competing claims of the various Jewish private school systems, solved the question by choosing public schools for their children—especially when these made it possible for them to observe the Sabbath.

Not enough time elapsed between 1918 and 1939 for the effects of the new school situation to emerge in any marked way. But there can be no doubt that had the former Polish government followed a decent policy toward its Jewish citizens, "Polonization" would have become a vital factor; even within those twenty years it assumed significance. Yet the government consistently discriminated against Jews, denying them educational and occupational opportunities; thus, despite the development among some of the Jewish youth of a marked attachment to Polish culture, and even of Polish nationalism, the mass of the younger generation turned away from that Polish culture in anger and disgust. But if assimilation was definitely rejected in favor of Jew-

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ish solidarity, this solidarity did not stem the tide away from the Synagogue.

Driven in upon themselves by a hostile Polish officialdom which in many respects pursued toward them the same idiotic and contradictory policies as czarist Russia had—wanting to make Jews complete Poles yet at the same time strangling them economically and socially; wanting to make them speak Polish yet denying them real cultural and educational opportunities so long as they remained Jewish—the Jews of independent Poland created a modern cultural life of their own, and a *Jewish* one. Partly this was due to the necessity of asserting Jewish self-respect against the repressive policy of the government. Partly it grew out of the need to find some solution, both cultural and political, to the anomalous Jewish situation. The resultant *Kulturkampf* waged among the Jewish parties in behalf of their different programs—in education, and in every other sphere as well—supplied the ferment for a rich, intense, and creative cultural life. There was an efflorescence of Hebrew and Yiddish literature in which all aspects of contemporary life were dealt with. The terms were modern, bearing little reference to institutional religion; a common motif was dissatisfaction with the status quo, whether expressed in nationalist, Zionist, or socialist aspirations.

The fact that the only organized Jewish grouping to collaborate with the official regime was the Agudah served but further to compromise Orthodoxy in the eyes of the socially conscious groups of East European Jewry. The anti-Orthodox elements set the prevailing tone, convincing more and more of their fellow Jews that the modern movements stood for Jewish self-respect and Jewish survival, while Orthodoxy by and large meant the continuation of the stifling and degrading conditions of the ghetto.

Thus it would not seem too much to say that the ideas of the Enlightenment, combining a rejection of traditional faith with acceptance of a fervent faith in reason, were on the verge of triumph among Polish Jewry in the years immediately before the outbreak of the war in 1939. What Hitler destroyed was not a totally traditional Jewry absorbed in the old medieval ways of Orthodox piety, but a Jewry agitated by new ideas and busy expanding its secular life.

East European Jewry was thus already faced with the problems that so agitate its American descendants today. Solutions to its problems were proposed in Yiddish and Hebrew—but the proposals themselves were engendered by the Enlightenment and represented a radical break with the Jewish past.

Indeed, when we consider the speed with which the overwhelming majority of the Jews who emigrated during the last half-century widened this break with the past, under the more favorable conditions of their new homes—in Western Europe, South Africa, North and South America—we may justly regard this zeal as a measure of how ripe those emigrants had already become to transform themselves into a largely modern people. Is it not clear that those who cry out today against the secularization of Jewish life in America must seek its origins not in the fleshpots of New York, but back across the sea in the supposedly piety-bound ghettos of the Pale?

If this is so, then we must look upon the pressing problems created by the decline of traditional Judaism—the loss of faith, the disintegration of rabbinic authority, the lapse of the centrality and unity of the Synagogue in Jewish life—as problems arising out of the internal development of Judaism itself in the modern world. America as such is not the destructive solvent of Judaism, but is at most a catalyst that has deepened and accelerated a process begun long ago. It is in terms, not of some new, disintegrative force found only on these shores, but rather of the continuance of processes that go back fifty years or more to the East European homeland, that we must view the impact of modern life on the religion and culture of the Jewish people.

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THE GAY DOG

A Story

HANS W. ROSENHAUPT

HAD my Uncle Ernst lived, he would be seventy-five this spring. He was forty-five when I first saw him, but the top of his head was already bald. As he sat in our drawing room with Father's sister, whom he wanted to marry, I climbed on his lap to kiss his bald pate. He smelled good, and looked well fed and happy, unlike the rest of the grown-ups in Germany after the First World War. Thirty years ago I was quite old enough to know that he could not possibly own the green wig which he promised to wear for the wedding. But he was the kind of guy who in spite of everything might turn up with one, even if he had to rent it.

Uncle Ernst married Father's sister in the Frankfort town hall, the old *Römer,* and without green wig. When we came out of the dark building, the spring sun was shining and Uncle Ernst sent the cars away. The wedding party walked all the way home, bride and bridegroom in front, the rest trailing them at a distance, and everybody saying what an *Unikum* my uncle was. Now and then he halted to show his new wife something in a window or to point with his cane at a balcony or a piece of sculpture. He even stopped a while to chat with a friend, and my father was annoyed. It was Uncle Ernst's passion for impromptu chats in the street that many years later killed him.

I have little recollection of the wedding dinner; but the christening party for my little cousin, next spring, was a great affair, with gentlemen in cutaways, laughing ladies, and excited children running all over Uncle Ernst's house and between the rows of pink phlox in the garden. A famous professor of theology from Marburg blessed the child and preached a sermon which everybody considered liberal, and for which my uncle did not care. Several years later, when the German people were polled on the dispossession of their former princes, Uncle Ernst voted against the measure, and the rest of the family considered him an old reactionary for doing so.

UNCLE ERNST and Aunt Dora lived in a white house which smelled of old wood, escaped gas, fine furniture, camphor, good food, and a special shoe polish on which my uncle insisted. With his glossy handmade shoes he wore tailor-made suits. "In the long run it comes cheaper to have many good suits," he said. The same system of economy accounted for his rows of shoes, scads of ties, gloves, canes, and umbrellas. As time went on, Uncle Ernst became increasingly reluctant to buy new things. He preferred the old clothes which connected him with his glorious and vigorous past.

Gradually more and more of this past became known. It appeared that uncle had always been surrounded by what my father called *Weiber*—wenches. At first that word produced visions of French chambermaids in black satin and white aprons lounging on sofas all over the house. Later it turned out that in his youth Uncle Ernst had known wonderful young women, singers and actresses, whom he had loved but not married mainly because he was too civilized to want to domesticate them. When he finally settled down, he married someone as self-

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HANS W. ROSENHAUPT was born in Frankfort on the Main in 1911, and came to the United States in 1935. He contributed to the outstanding journals of pre-war Germany, and put out several volumes of non-fiction. During the war he worked with U. S. Army Intelligence, and in 1949 published the book *How to Wage Peace.* We present here his first short story in English. Mr. Rosenhaupt is at present assistant director of admissions at Columbia University.

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sufficient as my aunt, and with the main purpose of having sons. These Aunt Dora produced. She was, by the way, very happy with Uncle Ernst, and intelligent enough not to fret when his old habits temporarily got the better of him.

Uncle Ernst smoked most of the time, usually cigars. He was fond of the slim dark cheroots built around a thin piece of straw which was removed before lighting and left a fine channel for the air. Uncle liked to tell about a bumpkin who was offered such a *Virginier* and smoked it straw and all without complaining. Whenever my uncle pulled out the straw, there was a happy little smile around his eyes which made you think of the bumpkin who did not know.

EVEN my complacent aunt was tense when her husband lectured on the perfect consistency of a meat dish of asparagus, eggs, and minced ham, served with anchovy sauce, for which his mother had left an eleborate recipe. I now know that it was the best food I ever ate. But once, when the cook left, my uncle resigned himself to weeks of indifferent food. He was irritated only when people did not cook up to what he believed was their potential.

Uncle Ernst had inherited his father's publishing house, and for many years had left its running to a man who took life seriously and who eventually became his partner. Although Uncle had no interest in the business side of the job, literature was as important to him as women or even his garden. He liked to pose as a shrewd judge of the public's taste, but deep in his heart he was surprised when a book he liked sold well, for many of his choices lost money. All the same, he never said what so many smart people say every day, that the world wants to be deceived and therefore ought to be, or that people are stupid. He simply was not much interested in what others thought, and accordingly lived in a fool's paradise. But he was a wonderful kind of fool.

Uncle Ernst's maternal grandfather had been a Lutheran minister, and his old maiden sister went to church regularly, but he did not have a religious bone in his body. He never wondered what would become of him after death, or who had made the world, or why people have to suffer. When Aunt Dora became mortally ill, he was upset, but the experience had no meaning for him; he even seemed embarrassed about his wife's weakness. He was lost when she died, but obviously her death happened outside the tight world within which he lived.

Though he knew many people, he was not really intimate with anyone. After twenty years he began calling his partner by his first name, but he never used the familiar *du* with him. He was friendly enough toward his staff, but as soon as they became what he considered too familiar, he had a shouting rage that might last an hour. This scared everybody within hearing for months; when the staff began to forget, Uncle threw a fresh fit.

UNCLE ERNST's first reaction to Hitler was not unusual for a gentleman of his class. He thought Hitler was a big joke, and for many reasons. The man was an Austrian, and so by definition not to be taken seriously; he wrote terrible prose; worse, he had never been an officer. Later on, Uncle Ernst showed signs of grudging admiration for Hitler's glorification of power; this was probably nothing but a nostalgic return to the literary hero of his youth, Nietzsche. When after 1933 Hitler made it clear that he would follow to the letter his absurd program, Uncle Ernst reverted to his original appraisal of him as a big joke.

Uncle Ernst's paternal grandfather had been a Jew who had changed his religion and name and had married another converted Jew. On his mother's side Uncle Ernst was what the Nazis called pure Aryan. The constant talk about blood, race, and per cents annoyed him. His favorite story in those days concerned the man, found watering his grandmother's grave, who explained that he was baptizing her posthumously. When he could be persuaded to be serious on the subject, he restricted himself to two statements: one, he considered him-

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self a German, and two, only dogs needed pedigrees.

Even in his wildest youth Uncle Ernst had never journeyed further than the nearby Black Forest for summer vacations, and once abroad, to Switzerland. After his marriage he had resisted every attempt of my aunt to move him away from his garden and his books, if only for a week. He was not openly angry when after 1933 some of the family left the country, but you could tell from the way he talked that he was hurt and a little ashamed of having such cowards for in-laws.

Eventually, Uncle Ernst was forced to sell his publishing house. But he kept reminding everybody that the good price he had received would buy the firm back as soon as the nonsense ended, next year, or so. Eventually Uncle Ernst did move, to another part of Frankfort, because he could not stand the sight of Prussians inside the old business house.

One day an SS man delivered a piece of yellow felt in the shape of a Star of David at Uncle's apartment; as a half-Jew Uncle was required to wear a Jew star on his coat. Uncle thought the matter over. He did not look Jewish, and might get into more trouble than the whole thing was worth. Besides, the idea was childish and in bad taste. He put the piece of felt in his pocket.

In the fall of 1939 he received a written warning that he must wear the Jew star. Uncle went to the police station where he was known as a gentleman of means and culture. The police sergeant on duty rose when Uncle came in and offered him a chair. But there was nothing, the police officer said, that could be done; orders were orders. He suggested that this was only a temporary measure, and by implication deplored the fact that he had to enforce regulations written by the sorry people from the North, whom, for want of a better name, the happy people of Frankfort call Prussians.

Uncle left the police station with the star on his coat. As soon as he got home it returned to his breast pocket. Then for a few days he stayed home.

When he went out again he wore one of his beautiful suits of English cloth, spats, a cane with a silver band, an aster in his lapel, but no Jew star. He took his favorite stroll, along the parks that surround the old city, past the churchyard where Goethe's mother is buried, down a street known for its fine food stores and lovingly called *Fressgässche* or Gorger's Lane; he stopped at a *Wirthaus* with a wreath of pine hanging from its flagpole to indicate that fresh cider was available. He sat down in the cobbled yard, ordered a glass of sweet cider and a slice of rye bread with "hand" cheese and chopped onion and vinegar, generally referred to as *Handkäse mit Musik*, and gave the innkeeper his considered opinion on the quality of this year's cider, comparing it to last year's, and both vintages to the great years of cider. The new waitress was noted with approval; the yard boy's zeal in dealing with the golden leaves was commended; the rapid advance of our troops in Poland was mentioned in passing, with some favorable reference to the gallant Poles whose horses were no match for our tanks; a speedy end to the war predicted. This led to a discussion of the many civic improvements which would then be undertaken, foremost among them the paving of the street outside with wooden blocks, as in the old days. Perhaps, so the two men thought, this would encourage the return of draft horses whose clippety-clop on the pavement had added so much to everybody's happiness. My uncle left the inn with warm thoughts of a golden age for his beloved city.

Outside the old guardhouse in the center of Frankfort, Uncle Ernst met an old friend of the family, *Bankier* Kronenberger, a little Jew with pince-nez and a habitually anxious look on his face. Kronenberger was not interested in civic improvements; he was fearful of his life. The success of the Polish campaign would encourage Hitler to go on, he said. England and France would slowly but surely slap him down. In the meantime, to divert people's attention, he would again bait the Jews. If he had a chance of leaving the country, Kronenberger said, he would go today.

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Uncle Ernst tried to calm the anxious man. His own optimistic appraisal of Germany's insanity as temporary was not shared by his friend. Uncle Ernst therefore argued that a victorious Germany would badly need men with Kronenberger's experience in international finance. He was painting a fine picture of a much sought-after Kronenberger, attentively listened to by Von Ribbentrop and his staff, when a young SS man stopped his bicycle. Was the gentleman not familiar with regulations, he asked; Aryans must not talk to Jews in public. Obviously the quickest way to get rid of the nuisance was to tell the truth. "The joke is on you," said Uncle Ernst, triumphantly producing his own Jew star. Did he not know that the star had to be worn in full sight? asked the young man. He did, said Uncle Ernst, but it would take more than a mere snot-nose of a boy to tell him, an old army officer, what to wear and what not to wear. With that he turned back to his pale friend. "Just a moment," said the SS man, and slowly turned Uncle Ernst around by the shoulder. "Suppose you give me your name and address." He took the information down, jumped on his bike, and pedaled off at great speed. The small crowd around the pair looked with respect at my uncle, and dispersed with snide remarks about Prussian snot-noses.

Uncle spent the rest of the day and the next in a happy glow. Anger had no doubt released enough adrenalin in his bloodstream to make him feel good. He started the tedious job, undertaken only once a year, of clearing out the mess of books and manuscripts which cluttered up his bedroom. He said to his young housekeeper that the incident proved his point, often made, that the whole bedevilment could be stopped by a few stouthearted men who refused to go along with it.

A week later Uncle Ernst received a letter asking him to report at the police station. The sergeant who had been so friendly last time was gone and the officer who sat in his chair was formal and curt. He regretted the necessity of startling my uncle, he said, but he could give him only one hour to pack. A car would call for him at his house. He was not at liberty to disclose where Uncle Ernst would be taken.

The young housekeeper noticed that Uncle Ernst's hands were shaking as he packed his suitcase. But his voice was calm when he told her that possibly he was in line for a big talking to by the SS. Undoubtedly he would be back within a day or so. Nevertheless, just in case, it might be a good idea to inform his lawyer that he had been called for, and to start things moving if he should not be back within three or four days. For the first time since 1933 Uncle Ernst mentioned the name of an elderly prince who had risen to prominence in the party, and who, in his youth, had been his friend. If he should be in trouble the prince, for old times' sake, would undoubtedly help him out.

It was unnecessary to trouble the prince. Within a week a note arrived at the house, announcing the sudden death of Olten, Ernst Wilhelm, while a prisoner of the state. His remains would be shipped home soon, and announcement of their arrival would be made.

WE CAN only speculate on the events which led to my uncle's death in the concentration camp. The chances are that he died by a guard's bullet as he was setting a bad example for all the tortured souls whose meekness only prolonged their sufferings. Perhaps Uncle Ernst died with a flash of insight that civilization, as he knew it, was outmoded, and that for the time being people like him were not wanted. If so, he may have died without fear.

I do not know whether the coffin was sealed or not. In any event, nobody who loved my uncle would have bothered to open it. The man who had christened his two sons read the funeral service in the presence of a few women. One of them told me, in the last weeks of the war, when I was in Frankfort as an American soldier, where the grave was. But I did not go. It was a foregone conclusion that a gay dog like Uncle Ernst would not be found in a cemetery.

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FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

TRAVELS OF BENJAMIN THE FUND-RAISER

Some Entries from an Envoy's Daybook

JUDD L. TELLER

WE, IN the line of that great traveler of yesteryear, Benjamin of Tudela, blessed be his memory, live in a land rediscovered by Jews several centuries after its first discovery by the intrepid Columbus of whom it has been reported, although never confirmed, and even strongly denied, that he was of the Seed of Abraham, a son of those, may God protect us, who were tortured by flame to renounce their faith.

Let it be noted that we, known to our brethren as Latter-Day Benjamins, travel at least twice a year this new and yet hardly settled land to remind our brethren scattered its length and breadth of their obligation to help, with monies, the less fortunate of our race. For know that it is a vast and almost infinite realm and our brethren need reminding, forced as many are to live in remote provinces.

In our twice-a-year journeyings, we travel by transport of a kind our revered ancestor could not have imagined—by car, coach, and Pullman, by United, American, and Capitol. Our hazards are a mite in comparison with his, being mainly discomforts of the belly resulting from the custom in the communities of this realm to receive our tidings and make their gifts while gathered at a meal. Yet, in our own humble way, we carry forth the word of the unity of His people; and, may God forgive the habit of forgetfulness in this generation, if it were not for our journeyings and appointments, it might befall that the feeling of fellowship with their brethren might be swept away from the hearts and memories of these settlements even as topsoil is swept away by the wind.

FIRST ENTRY: The calendar by which we perform our service is fixed by signs other than the moon, and may He again forgive us Who fathoms the soul of the lowliest worm. Ours is the shortest year known to man, of only six to eight months' duration and divided into two all too brief seasons for planting and harvest, denominated The Fall Campaign and The Spring Campaign. Even the most bold among us withdraw early in the month of June, and do not venture forth again until well past the Days of Awe. In the months between, the communities suffer a falling away. For during the warm months of the year, our brethren, like all other inhabitants of this affluent land, delight in the sun and the ocean, disport on beaches and mountains and the golfing hillocks, meadows, and sands, and store away their Jewish souls with their winter rugs. When they return homewards, the High Holidays are imminent, their calendars bulge with business affairs, inventory, and special

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BENJAMIN OF TUDELA, that great Jewish voyager of the turbulent 12th century, visited almost 300 places, from Provence to India. JUDD L. TELLER, in his career as an American fund-raiser, did not cover such exotic territory or risk such grave dangers—but, on the other hand, he raised far more money than any medieval traveler could have, even taking into account the intervening inflation of values. Of the original Benjamin's account of his travels, the Universal Jewish Encyclopedia says, ". . . it is carefully detailed . . . but frequent anecdotes and legends prevent it from becoming monotonous." We would make no less modest a claim for these notes of Mr. Teller's.

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sales, and the few sunny Sundays still left are set aside to the rituals of the golf links. And even so, one of these few and precious Sunday mornings is committed to *Kever avoth*: the whole family sets out to the burial grounds by car, or several cars, depending on its numbers, to inform their fathers who have gone before that they may be proud in heaven of the earthly goods their children have accumulated, and, God be willing, shall continue to accumulate.

The Fall Campaign commences immediately after the Days of Awe and ceases early in December, for the Jews of this realm are mostly merchants and December is the season of pre-Christmas buying; the degree of generosity of whole communities for almost the rest of the coming year is often fixed by what the register rings up in this single month. January and February belong to desolation; merchants are counting their wares, placing orders for the spring, haggling over credits, and generally too distraught to listen to tidings from their brethren. So the Spring Campaign is launched in March and collapses early in June.

Various events, some God-imposed, and many more of man's creation, do intrude upon this calendar. The fall has its rains, and also its games, when it is the habit of the people to pour into vast and noisy places, whence it has been arranged to transmit to those who forego this pleasure, and sit at a fund-gathering meal, special bulletins on the progress of these events, and it is true that the elation or despair which the news does engender also influences the response to appeals for funds. Yet by reason of a mystery too deep to grasp, the rain which washes out the games also washes out attendance at these worthy communal gatherings.

The Spring Campaign has its own dangers and destiny. Passover and Shavuoth, although none too rigidly observed by the offspring of Abraham on this continent, are held so sacred nonetheless as to require deferring all gatherings at communal meals. And it may happen that the sun shines early in the season so that the golf may prosper. How happy would we be if there were a climate of neither rain nor balm, of a tincture most conducive to the gathering of Jewish funds!

SECOND ENTRY: My journeyings have already begun and life is meal after meal. There are the Sunday Morning Breakfasts, when the men of law and medicine and commerce rise early to convene over a spread of bagel and lox, and when a guest-speaker-from-out-of-town, this being myself, delivers "an inspirational talk on the needs," to the effect that each in the audience rises to announce his givings (called Pledge) and his readiness to obtain offerings from a number of brethren who have cunningly absented themselves from the gathering.

There is the Noon Luncheon, the least of all meals, generally attended only by women, and of several hours' duration, at which pledges sometimes are made, but mainly at which the women do map out the means of parting a neighbor from her monies. The meal is simple by this country's measure, almost abstemious: a fruit mixture, a slice of fish, green salad, some sweetened icings, and black coffee, unsugared.

The evening gatherings are of many forms, and it is these that are of the essence of the Spring Campaign and the Fall Campaign. There is the parlor meeting, assembled after the evening meal in the home of a wealthy man, to which only the affluent are invited, to receive spirituous drinks and eloquent appeal, and to make pledges. There is the dinner meeting, generally in the ballroom of a large hostelry, where spirituous drinks are served quickly to soothe the palate and stupefy the wits, after which all are seated at laden tables according to rank, which means the measure of each man's own contribution and of his effort to elicit commensurate voluntary offerings from others. The meal is made of chicken in differing states—more chickens are eaten by the Jews of this realm at these meals in a single year than all the generations of Abraham's seed have consumed for *kaporot* since the inception of the latter *minhag*. Then comes the speaker, and man and his monies are, hopefully, soon parted.

And like the plagues that God inflicted upon Egypt, you shall also know these meetings by their abbreviations: there is the RP, or Report Meeting, attended only by "captains" and "teams," these being the official titles of those who urge others into giving, though they are also called other names; the AG or BG meetings—Advanced Gifts or Big Gifts, generally synonymous—at which the men greatest blessed with substance in the

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community are called in and requested to make their pledges in advance, for the lesser folk are certain to determine the size of their own giving by the contributions the "big men" have made. There is the GM, or General Meeting, rarely attended by BG's, whose purpose is to "get the community talking about the campaign" and thus lead to IG—Increased Giving, meaning a larger giving this year than last year—by the BG's. There are other code symbols, but they are far too numerous to set forth here.

THIRD ENTRY: When I entered the BG meeting tonight I was met with long faces. The weather was evil and one of Satan's distractions—alas, one of our own flesh and blood!—was on the television. One BG had declared in advance that he would "cut from last year"; others did waver, saying it all would depend on how much they might have to pay in government taxes; many did find excuses not to attend the meeting at all.

I was greeted by the lament of Zion in exile: "We must make haste to find a new 'gimmick' (that is, secret power) to turn them out to meetings. It becomes more difficult year after year. They know that if they come, they may have to give more than they intend, so they stay away."

After I spoke, with all the power at my command, pledges were called for. Several persons announced their AG's—all IG—for so it had been prearranged, so as to set an example for the others. The list of these IG's was soon exhausted and the meeting journeyed into unknown territory. A name was called. A bearish individual in slacks and a lumberjack moved heavily in his chair, yawned, and looked around with bloodshot eyes. "Did you call my name?" "Yes." "I felt lousy when I came into this room, but you don't know what a good nap will do. What did I give last year?" "Eight hundred." "Well, make it a straight thousand this year." Spirits rose. His neighbor, and business partner, spoke up. "I guess," he said, "if Jack who has not heard the story, because he napped, adds two hundred, I, having heard the story and been inspired, can double his increase, and if he doubles his, I will double mine again." The meeting was a success, all were delighted, and praised be the man who spoke better from his slumbers than many fully awake.

These meetings generally are attended by two messengers from afar—the guest speaker, who comes into town just for the meeting and removes himself again right after, and the so-named "field man," who is sent by national campaign headquarters to form something called a local campaign committee, to arrange for meetings and haggle for pledges. May the almighty and all-merciful God protect our children and our children's children from the fate of the field man, for it is in the nature of his work that his humor is both affable and frenetic, and it is his fate that his standing with campaign headquarters in New York City depends on the results of last evening's dinner or this morning's breakfast. Furthermore, his efforts of many weeks may be undone by rainy weather that prevents a meeting which was, from the outset, hard to arrange. Or it may befall that there is an unforeseen falling out between a BG and the chairman of the community's campaign, so that the BG may deliberately cut his gift in half to impede the chairman's success, and the index of giving throughout the community falls disastrously because the contagion has spread and others are saying: "If the BG can cut, so can we."

But if omens are propitious and the harvest good, the field man, delighted by the evening's results, races by vehicle to the nearest Western Union office to convey his triumph by telegraph to national headquarters. He also is instructed to telegraph disaster, when it occurs.

FOURTH ENTRY: At a Breakfast Meeting this morning I was assisted by a Fan Dancer. This term is used in our hierarchy to designate a person of national reputation who can "bring out a crowd." He is either a celebrated writer or a high official of the state, preferably not of our own faith; as often as not, the Fan Dancer is the only speaker, and the meeting he addresses is the major Jewish community celebration of the year. The Fan Dancer in this instance was a governmental official of such high repute that he requires a weighty fee for each appearance. He explained he had been drawn across two-thirds of a continent by the high merit of our cause, to give such aid as might be within his humble powers. The problems confronting the new State of Israel, he said, were precisely those that confronted

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these United States until not so very long ago; for example, the Arabs are not unlike this country's Indians; and like Israel, he said, America to this very day is poor in strategic resources, dependent on Bolivia for tin, on Asia for rubber.

Those who called the breakfast had long faces. They had hoped that this Fan Dancer would turn out a greater number. Every man of means in the community was told that his absence would be a desecration of the Name. "How would it look if Jews stayed away from a meal when a *goy* has flown all the way from Washington to be there?" There seemed to have been many who did not care how it looked, and their seats were vacant.

Still, it is argued that the Fan Dancer is necessary to the success of any campaign, even if larger numbers do not turn out and additional money is not gathered in. By making his appearance, he does raise the morale of the "captains" and "workers" in the campaign, advances their standing within the Jewish community, magnifies local Jewry's prestige in the eyes of the larger community. Or so it is said.

Our hierarchy indeed includes numerous *goyim,* who are true *hasidei umot haolam* ("righteous of the nations") who have long served in this cause. And then there is a throng of lesser, twilight creatures who speak with the gift of tongues because, or so it is rumored, they once made their pitch for salves, pills, and liquids, in the days before they took to the road crying the gospel of Jewish needs.

FIFTH ENTRY: We started out by plane at dawn this morning in a flurry of snowflakes that had grown into a blizzard by the time we arrived at this airport, where I was to have made a connecting flight. There was quite a crowd of fellow travelers at the terminal; field men and speakers, men and women of all ranks in the hierarchy, including a Fan Dancer or two, and several businessmen who for several weeks a year set their own affairs aside to travel the country to arouse other men of means to their responsibilities.

Converging from all directions, scheduled to depart in all directions, we have now been delayed here for many hours, thus upsetting scheduled Breakfasts, Report Meetings, and Advanced Gifts Meetings in a dozen cities. Many oracles and omens were pondered before these dates were set: that on this particular day there would be no other meetings in town, no appearances by itinerant performers, no weddings, no engagements, no anniversaries, no graduation or Bar Mitzvah parties, and that no major communal figure was so sick that his demise or funeral might occur on the day of the meeting; also that none of the BG lawyers in town would be tied up in out-of-town cases, or doctor-donors in surgery, and none of the BG businessmen in deals requiring his absence.

If we are grounded here much longer, all this laborious and arduous planning will have been for naught.

SIXTH ENTRY: The Seeds of Abraham in this realm contribute on a scale and with a will unprecedented in all the generations of our people on this earth, although it is true also, that their wealth, numbers, and general welfare are equally without precedent in the annals of our dispersed people.

In our long travail among the peoples of the globe, communities could always invoke some means of coercion to persuade brethren to submit offerings for communal needs. Some governments gave to the communities sovereign powers of taxation, but even where this was not so, the community had in its hand rewards and penalties which caught up with the recalcitrant at his grave, if he managed somehow to evade them in his lifetime. His remains were refused interment—the gravest calamity to befall any Jew on his death—until his heirs transmitted to the community an amount exceeding the contributions he had refused to make during his life.

But in this country, unhappily for us, the custom has arisen that Jews request in their wills that they be cremated like the heathen, and many are not even concerned whether or not they are buried in a Jewish cemetery.

This unfortunate circumstance has certainly deprived the community of what has always been a powerful arm. But the Jewish community in this realm, unable to penalize recalcitrants, nevertheless has, in its need, found other means, and the results, on occasion, are as effective.

Here are examples:

A tight-fisted creature in a given community, who for years had been mocking his

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peers who worked and contributed to Jewish needs, suddenly found himself one day—and may God protect us from the same—floundering for credit for his business. The one person in the community who could give him credit explained that there was little reason for anyone to concern himself with the fortunes of a man who for these many years had been callous to the fate of his fellow Jews. It was only upon pledging a sizable sum to Jewish needs, payable on the recovery of his fortune, that he was granted this credit. For this and similar reasons, the chairmen of the local campaigns are generally people upon whom many of their fellows are dependent or may be dependent for favors in the future.

The case of another man—and God forgive us that there is his kind in Israel: he could contribute $25,000 a year "and charge it to taxes," but all he was in the habit of giving was $500. He was the wealthiest man in his community, but with his pockets closed. He decided, one day, to remove his family to a large community where resided men of infinitely greater wealth than his, and some culture. There he applied for membership in a club to which only the foremost and most substantial of the Jewish community belonged. His application was speedily refused, and no explanation given. He reapplied, and asked for an explanation if rejected. The explanation was: "Here a man is judged by what he does for fellow Jews, and we have learned of your ludicrous gift in the community you have come from." Thereupon, so highly did he value the opinion of these elders in Israel, that he offered to contribute, if he was admitted to membership, the sum of $25,000 to Jewish causes. In return, he was accepted as a probationary member for one year.

The average person is infinitely more sensitive than such men as these to his good repute among his neighbors, and he responds to lesser pressures; consequently when announcing his pledge at a communal meal he feels constrained to give more than when privately asked. But this in turn may mean that he may feel constrained not to come at all and attendance at these meals has fallen off, which also means that fewer Jews are reached by a direct word of tidings. Some ascribe the petering off in attendance to the Year of the Great Pressure. That was 1948, when Israel emerged, fought for its life, and won. It was then that national fund-raising headquarters had said: "This year can end Jewish needs for all time. Give all you can, we shall not call again." Doors at meetings and dinners were locked and the imprisoned were told they would not be allowed to leave until they had raised a quota decided upon in New York. The Commander-in-Chief had marshaled illimitable resources, like Napoleon before Acre and Moscow, for the Year of Years' appeal on the Jews of this realm: *chazanim* delivered *"El maleh"*; actresses, speaking tearful lamentations, paraded as the living personification of Mother Rachel lamenting her children on the road to Bethlehem; survivors of the horrors of Ashkenaz were marched before the public; and paraplegic young men and women, casualties of Israel's Battle of Liberation, drew the tears and cheers of men and women. But next year the people refused to come, for had they not been told this would be the last of appeals?

SEVENTH ENTRY: As people stood up tonight to announce their pledges, the question kept racing through my mind: the Jews of this *medina* are rich, almost entirely unafflicted by misfortunes and harassments, they are remote from the sites where misery stalks the Jew—and in the nature of things, moss should have covered the Jewish conscience of our brethren in this realm and their ears should have become deaf to the cry of anguish, and yet they give. They could give more—yet why do they give at all?

What moves them, it seems to this scribe, is what has always moved the sons and daughters of the House of Jacob, through the generations. For three causes our brethren have always given: (a) for the Holy Land; (b) for orphans, widows, the old and the afflicted, and all the hapless and indigent of our people; (c) for *pidyan shevuyim*, the ransoming of captive Jews.

Ever since the First Dispersion, emissaries from Israel—both saintly men and adventurers—have crossed the earth in search of money for the maintenance of the scholars and ascetics who settled in Zion's Desolation. And this partaking of Zion's glory remains today the chief claim on all Jewish giving in this realm. So it is, that although the Spring Campaign and the Fall Campaign monies

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are distributed among innumerable causes and institutions, the appeal is sounded on the high note of Aid to Zion, and not for naught.

With love of Zion is intertwined compassion for the indigent and afflicted, for the orphans and widows, here near our own doors. After all the pledges have been called, announced, and recorded, supplementary monies are obtained by a procedure like that of the auctioning of *aliyot* on Simchat Torah in the Orthodox synagogues of the Old World. "Who will give just a little more to help these children who need milk, these homeless who need a roof over their heads, these tattered who need garments to clothe their nakedness? Mr. X. gives an additional fifty dollars, over and above his contribution, who will raise him? Mr. Y. gives in honor of his newborn grandchild. Who else wants to give for a grandchild? Mr. Z. gives in honor of his partner. Who else will give in honor of a partner?"

But the cause, next to Israel, arousing warmest response is *pidyan shevuyim,* ransoming the captives. In this realm, the Jew is constantly engaged in ransoming himself, although he is not a captive at all and lives, indeed, in freedom unprecedented in the annals of our people. He has founded societies, funds, and institutions, by many names, engaged in ransoming him from a captivity that every nightmare promises, but which is not yet of his world, and which by the work of these societies—who under their various names struggle for liberties and equalities, against defamation and for interfaith good will—he hopes to forfend from his world, and his children's world.

THE distribution of the community's harvest of funds is determined by a special committee set up for this purpose. Often I am puzzled by the reason, or unreason, of their behavior. There is, for example, an organization for which immigrant Jews of an earlier generation have high regard. Many a Jew, now rich in his community, recalls that when he arrived in Castle Garden decades ago, a befuddled immigrant with a large identification tag in his coat lapel and no money in his pocket, a representative of this organization greeted him with a consoling *sholom aleichem,* bought him his first glass of tea, paid his first week's rent, and got him his first job. Since then, the organization has largely outlived its primal reason for existence, and its survival, at any rate, is assured —or so it is believed—by a reserve fund. Yet, its emissaries still traverse the land, and on allocation committees, in remote communities, men of influence, who remember who bought them their first meal on American soil, continue to vote it allocations.

There are innumerable obscure organizations, with less glorious pasts than this one, that likewise drain off monies from the large flow for Jewish needs. No one, on a Jewish allocation committee, would ever deny an allocation to an orphanage or home for the aged, although it may exist only on stationery; but who ever investigates? High on the list of lesser causes are homes for tuberculars. Many a successful man in his community started his career as an immigrant spitting out his lungs in a sweatshop in the large city. His illness was the disguised hand of Providence which guided him to drier and more sparsely settled shores where he has recovered, thrived, and prospered. The cause of the tubercular always brings tears to his eyes, and he refuses to believe that, while a few such institutions are foremost among all that minister to those so stricken in America, there are others which are all but fictitious; so these too receive handsome sums.

There are, in this realm, several institutions of Jewish learning. Although the amounts they ask from the communities are modest, what they actually get nonetheless falls short. Perhaps this is because the Jewish educator in this land, unlike the *roshei yeshivot* of the Old World, is a distraught and frequently beardless creature, and has shied away from any direct contact with the members of his raucous tribe. But another reason why Jewish education is among the lesser causes is that the immigrant Jew in this land and his son and grandson have always aimed at becoming part of the people amidst whom they live, and they fear Jewish education as something that would set them apart. However, their affinity with their martyred brethren under Ashkenaz and their pride in Israel have been slowly releasing them from this fear. They flounder now for stronger bonds with their brethren than persecution and affliction, and of late I have even had addressed to me the query: "There must certainly be more than this to this business of being a Jew?" And in some small communities, far apart, men and

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women have formed study circles in Jewish history and Jewish writings. In some instances these have been initiated by the rabbi, in most instances by a businessman or a lawyer conversant in letters. An energetic woman, in one community, has persuaded her friends to convert their bridge club into a group for the study of the *Zohar,* in English translation. These women aim to "adjust our beliefs to the needs of this atomic age" or "reinforce our lives with the spiritual," may their names, if not their phraseology, be for a blessing.

EIGHTH ENTRY: It is the consensus of the fund-raising hierarchy that, as a rule, Jews residing in the great metropolitan areas give less than their brethren in middle-sized communities. And it is a further axiom that the Orthodox and pious immigrant Jew who has amassed wealth in this land habitually gives less and demands greater recognition for his giving than the more assimilated generations, impious in respect to religious observance, born in this country and, as is frequently the case, descended from parents and grandparents also born in this realm. Why this should be when, as most of us would reasonably expect, the contrary should prevail—is a mystery, which we leave for men more learned and wise.

But the ways of the cities, the largest, the middle-sized, and the small—of this we know from our travels. In all of them alike, as their annals have already made clear, it is the ambition of communal leaders, everywhere, to increase each year the money raised by their community. Yet, the great metropolitan community where I addressed a meeting this evening is headed by a leadership that has vowed long ago never to exceed a certain amount, whatever the needs, and has lived up to its vow.

In the metropolis, thousands of humans live within separate high residential structures, some of them now with terraces and hanging gardens, in offensive propinquity, and the only escape from this closeness is pretended unawareness of the existence of neighbors. The Jewish community can reach at its members only through their trade and professional associations, which means that the pressure is restricted to the breadwinner alone, and his family is exempt from it entirely, whereas in the smaller community, the conduct of a single member may affect the status of an entire *mishpocha.* This is one reason why people in smaller towns often are more generous givers than their normal nature would permit.

But the very small Jewish community, of one hundred or two hundred souls, is often the least responsive, although I have come across notable exceptions. The young intermarry, for there are insufficient brides and grooms of our own faith to go around for all of marriageable age; or they drift away to larger towns, and there is no local succession. One exception to the rule that I know of, has to do with a group of small towns where a wealthy Jew, an owner of oil wells, making his weekly rounds to inspect his holdings, brings weekly tidings of events abroad to the most isolated families, and rounds them up once a year for a great fund-raising meal. These meetings have since brought about the establishment of a traveling Hebrew school, teachers going from town to hamlet, and I have discovered some youngsters whose tongues have even been tested in the Sacred Speech.

Woe to the community that has one wealthy man, wealthier above all the rest! Such a man can determine exactly how much he wishes to give, disregarding the pushes and pulls within the community; lesser men soon follow his example. Yet no matter how little he gives, his contribution may still be so large a percentage of the total sum raised that if he is reproached for giving little, he can reply: "I may not give at all," which would be fatal to the campaign, so that no one ever even dares reproach him. This is not the case, of course, where there are several wealthy men, for this condition generates rivalry for honors.

There are, furthermore, communities of the retired, located in the warm areas of the land. Aging Jews who have saved modest or large fortunes remove themselves there to live out their days, baking their wrinkling skins like potatoes in the sun. They may have given freely before retirement, but in retirement they are changed and hardened, haunted by fears of conspiracies to deprive them of hard-earned wealth. Besides, their doctors have counseled them against excitement that might bring their blood pressures up. So they do not wish to be dismayed by news of hapless brethren. They prefer to

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imagine Jewry as a retired people, reclining in deck chairs in the sun.

NINTH ENTRY: I close these notations, written during the Fall Campaign of this year, on our calendar, 5712, with three notes on three people I met in my journeyings:

It was at a BG (Big Gift) meeting that I met Mrs. B., a Gentile, the only woman in a group made up of the twenty-five wealthiest people in that community. They gave generously, and later all rose to pay special honor to Mrs. B.; she is the woman in the town, as they know, who does the wash for all the Jewish BG families, working from dawn to evening. Her earnings are less than twenty dollars a week. Yet, for the past year and a half, she has been donating weekly the sum of $1.00 for Jewish needs. But it was apparent that she was in some deep perturbation at the meeting; and indeed it turned out she had been brought there by some pretext. Her gift had always been anonymous, and until the fact was disclosed at the meeting, none but the secretary of the community's Fall Campaign had known about it. I asked her why she gave. She replied: "I am devout and cognizant of God's pledge to restore His People to Zion. Now that He has begun to fulfill His Divine Promise, I want the privilege of assisting in His mission."

In another community, the BG's conspired and agreed among themselves to cut. I finished my address and they were loud in their praise, but hardly a cut was restored. Seeing that the BG's had cut, lesser men said: "If the seals do not give, should the minnows?" The disaster was evident while the first pledges were still being called. This happened at a dinner meeting at a hotel; and, unnoted except by a few, a Gentile had walked in and sat down on the outskirts of the audience. He now rose—tall, red-faced, a most *goyish*-looking *goy*. "I was moved by this plea for Jewish needs," he said, "and by the cause of Israel. Here is my check for one hundred dollars." Seeing that the pledging was slow, he rose again: "I shall give another fifty. Who will raise me?" No one did. He rose for the third time. "Whether you raise me or not, you can have my additional fifty." There still was no reaction, but silence. The chairman hastily adjourned the meeting. One of the Jews who had cut, and he was one whom I knew as one of the two or three most substantial in the community, came up to me, his face flushed: "I have always maintained this man was an anti-Semite. Don't you see what he was trying to do tonight? He tried to show up the Jews, but we do not give a damn for his opinion." Others, however, say that though the meal was certainly not the Seder, he was the prophet Elijah in disguise. But, to this date, the cuts still stand. And so from this, and other such happenings, it comes to be said that there are certain cities and certain individuals that if the Messiah—blessed be he—himself came and asked, it would avail naught.

But in another city there is one who is known in his community as The Saint. The owner of a large retail store, he is a man of relatively modest means. Although he speaks the realm's language well, his accents are not those of a native; yet he is, by all standards, the outstanding citizen of his community, held in high esteem by the Gentiles too, which, of course, adds to his esteem among Jews. Although his public charities are many, his private charities are no less numerous and most of them are *matan beseser*, "concealed giving," with none, often not even the recipient himself, knowing the name of the giver. It is several years since he first donated at the annual public meal a sum well beyond his means. He has done it annually ever since, incurring debts to pay his pledges, hoping that wealthier men would be shamed, in turn, into increasing their gifts. They have not been, and when his example is cited, they reply: "He is a saint, and saints are crazy, and we are neither." This year, he said he would cut his gift to suit his means, especially since his store has not been doing well. Yet, when I was through with my address, he rose and pledged the same as he had always done. The audience gasped, but he explained: "If I would cut my gift, there would not be a single large contribution from this community. I would then feel ashamed to live among you. Yet I must live amongst you, because I make my living here. So to live here and not feel ashamed, I must keep up the same pledge, year after year. I can always borrow some, because my credit at the bank, thank God, is still good." It is upon such as these—may their names be for a blessing—that the Lord depends, to maintain the world and redeem in each generation the good name of Israel.

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CEDARS OF LEBANON

THE SONG OF SONGS

I

THE song of songs, which is
Solomon's.

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—
For thy love is better than wine.
Thine ointments have a goodly fragrance;
Thy name is as ointment poured forth;
Therefore do the maidens love thee.
Draw me, we will run after thee;
The king hath brought me into his chambers;
We will be glad and rejoice in thee,
We will find thy love more fragrant than wine!
Sincerely do they love thee.
'I am black, but comely,
O ye daughters of Jerusalem,
As the tents of Kedar,
As the curtains of Solomon.
Look not upon me, that I am swarthy,
That the sun hath tanned me;
My mother's sons were incensed against me,
They made me keeper of the vineyards;
But mine own vineyard have I not kept.'
Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth,
Where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon;
For why should I be as one that veileth herself
Beside the flocks of thy companions?
If thou know not, O thou fairest among women,
Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock
And feed thy kids, beside the shepherds' tents.
I have compared thee, O my love,
To a steed in Pharaoh's chariots.
Thy cheeks are comely with circlets,
Thy neck with beads.
We will make thee circlets of gold
With studs of silver.

While the king sat at his table,
My spikenard sent forth its fragrance.
My beloved is unto me as a bag of myrrh,
That lieth betwixt my breasts.
My beloved is unto me as a cluster of henna
In the vineyards of En-gedi.

Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair;
Thine eyes are as doves.

Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant;
Also our couch is leafy.
The beams of our houses are cedars,
And our panels are cypresses.

II

I AM a rose of Sharon,
A lily of the valleys.

As a lily among thorns,
So is my love among the daughters.
As an apple-tree among the trees of the wood,
So is my beloved among the sons.
Under its shadow I delighted to sit,
And its fruit was sweet to my taste.
He hath brought me to the banqueting-house,
And his banner over me is love.
'Stay ye me with dainties, refresh me with apples;
For I am love-sick.'
Let his left hand be under my head,
And his right hand embrace me.
'I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
By the gazelles, and by the hinds of the field,

THIS English version of the Song of Songs is from the Jewish Publication Society's edition of *The Holy Scriptures* (1917). Readers are referred to Theodor H. Gaster's article elsewhere in this issue for a discussion of the various interpretations, old and new, that have been given of the Song.

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That ye awaken not, nor stir up love,
Until it please.'
Hark! my beloved! behold, he cometh,
Leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.
My beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart;
Behold, he standeth behind our wall,
He looketh in through the windows,
He peereth through the lattice.
My beloved spoke, and said unto me:
'Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.
For, lo, the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone;
The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of singing is come,
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;
The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs,
And the vines in blossom give forth their fragrance,
Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.
O my dove, that are in the clefts of the rock, in the covert of the cliff,
Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice;
For sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.'
'Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vineyards;
For our vineyards are in blossom.'
My beloved is mine, and I am his,
That feedeth among the lilies.
Until the day breathe, and the shadows flee away,
Turn, my beloved, and be thou like a gazelle or a young hart
Upon the mountains of spices.

III

By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth;
I sought him, but I found him not.
'I will rise now, and go about the city,
In the streets and in the broad ways,
I will seek him whom my soul loveth.'
I sought him, but I found him not.
The watchmen that go about the city found me:
'Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?'
Scarce had I passed from them,
When I found him whom my soul loveth:
I held him, and would not let him go,
Until I had brought him into my mother's house,
And into the chamber of her that conceived me.
'I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
By the gazelles, and by the hinds of the field,
That ye awaken not, nor stir up love,
Until it please.'

Who is this that cometh up out of the wilderness
Like pillars of smoke,
Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense,
With all powders of the merchant?
Behold, it is the litter of Solomon;
Threescore mighty men are about it,
Of the mighty men of Israel.
They all handle the sword,
And are expert in war;
Every man hath his sword upon his thigh,
Because of dread in the night.
King Solomon made himself a palanquin
Of the wood of Lebanon.
He made the pillars thereof of silver,
The top thereof of gold,
The seat of it of purple
The inside thereof being inlaid with love,
From the daughters of Jerusalem.
Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion,
And gaze upon king Solomon,
Even upon the crown wherewith his mother hath crowned him in the day of his espousals,
And in the day of the gladness of his heart.

IV

Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair;
Thine eyes are as doves behind thy veil;
Thy hair is as a flock of goats,
That trail down from mount Gilead.
Thy teeth are like a flock of ewes all shaped alike,
Which are come up from the washing;
Whereof all are paired,
And none faileth among them.
Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet,
And thy mouth is comely;
Thy temples are like a pomegranate split open
Behind thy veil.
Thy neck is like the tower of David
Builded with turrets,
Whereon there hang a thousand shields,

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All the armour of the mighty men.
Thy two breasts are like two fawns
That are twins of a gazelle,
Which feed among the lilies.
Until the day breathe,
And the shadows flee away,
I will get me to the mountain of myrrh,
And to the hill of frankincense.
Thou art all fair, my love;
And there is no spot in thee.
Come with me from Lebanon, my bride,
With me from Lebanon;
Look from the top of Amana,
From the top of Senir and Hermon,
From the lions' dens,
From the mountains of the leopards.
Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my bride;
Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes,
With one bead of thy necklace.
How fair is thy love, my sister, my bride!
How much better is thy love than wine!
And the smell of thine ointments than all manner of spices!
Thy lips, O my bride, drop honey—
Honey and milk are under thy tongue;
And the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.
A garden shut up is my sister, my bride;
A spring shut up, a fountain sealed.
Thy shoots are a park of pomegranates,
With precious fruits;
Henna with spikenard plants,
Spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon,
With all trees of frankincense;
Myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices.
Thou art a fountain of gardens,
A well of living waters,
And flowing streams from Lebanon.

Awake, O north wind;
And come, thou south;
Blow upon my garden,
That the spices thereof may flow out.
Let my beloved come into his garden,
And eat his precious fruits.

V

I AM come into my garden, my sister, my bride;
I have gathered my myrrh with my spice;
I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey;
I have drunk my wine with my milk.
Eat, O friends;
Drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.

I sleep, but my heart waketh;
Hark! my beloved knocketh:
'Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled;
For my head is filled with dew,
My locks with the drops of the night.'
I have put off my coat;
How shall I put it on?
I have washed my feet;
How shall I defile them?
My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door,
And my heart was moved for him.
I rose up to open to my beloved;
And my hands dropped with myrrh,
And my fingers with flowing myrrh,
Upon the handles of the bar.

I opened to my beloved;
But my beloved had turned away, and was gone.
My soul failed me when he spoke.
I sought him, but I could not find him;
I called him, but he gave me no answer.
The watchmen that go about the city found me,
They smote me, they wounded me;
The keepers of the walls took away my mantle from me.
'I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
If ye find my beloved,
What will ye tell him?
That I am love-sick.'
'What is thy beloved more than another beloved,
O thou fairest among women?
What is thy beloved more than another beloved,
That thou dost so adjure us?'
'My beloved is white and ruddy,
Pre-eminent above ten tousand.
His head is as the most fine gold,
His locks are curled,
And black as a raven.
His eyes are like doves
Beside the water-brooks;
Washed with milk,
And fitly set.
His cheeks are as a bed of spices,
As banks of sweet herbs;

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His lips are as lilies,
Dropping with flowing myrrh.
His hands are as rods of gold
Set with beryl;
His body is as polished ivory
Overlaid with sapphires.
His legs are as pillars of marble,
Set upon sockets of find gold;
His aspect is like Lebanon,
Excellent as the cedars.
His mouth is most sweet;
Yea, he is altogether lovely.
This is my beloved, and this is my friend,
O daughters of Jerusalem.'

VI

'WHITHER is thy beloved gone,
O thou fairest among women?
Whither hath thy beloved turned him,
That we may seek him with thee?'
'My beloved is gone down to his garden,
To the beds of spices,
To feed in the gardens,
And to gather lilies.
I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine,
That feedeth among the lilies.'

Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah,
Comely as Jerusalem,
Terrible as an army with banners.
Turn away thine eyes from me,
For they have overcome me.
Thy hair is as a flock of goats,
That trail down from Gilead.
Thy teeth are like a flock of ewes,
Which are come up from the washing;
Whereof all are paired,
And none faileth among them.
Thy temples are like a pomegranate split open
Behind thy veil.
There are threescore queens,
And fourscore concubines,
And maidens without number.
My dove, my undefiled, is but one;
She is the only one of her mother;
She is the choice one of her that bore her.
The daughters saw her, and called her happy;
Yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.
Who is she that looketh forth as the dawn,
Fair as the moon,
Clear as the sun,
Terrible as an army with banners?
I went down into the garden of nuts,
To look at the green plants of the valley,
To see whether the vine budded,
And the pomegranates were in flower.
Before I was aware, my soul set me
Upon the chariots of my princely people.

VII

RETURN, return, O Shulammite;
Return, return, that we may look upon thee.

What will ye see in the Shulammite?
As it were a dance of two companies.

How beautiful are thy steps in sandals,
O prince's daughter!
The roundings of thy thighs are like the links of a chain,
The work of the hands of a skilled workman.
Thy navel is like a round goblet,
Wherein no mingled wine is wanting;
Thy belly is like a heap of wheat
Set about with lilies.
Thy two breasts are like two fawns
That are twins of a gazelle.
Thy neck is as a tower of ivory;
Thine eyes as the pools in Heshbon,
By the gate of Bath-rabbim;
Thy nose is like the tower of Lebanon
Which looketh toward Damascus.
Thy head upon thee is like Carmel,
And the hair of thy head like purple;
The king is held captive in the tresses thereof.
How fair and how pleasant art thou,
O love, for delights!
This thy stature is like to a palm-tree,
And thy breasts to clusters of grapes.
I said: 'I will climb up into the palm-tree,
I will take hold of the branches thereof;
And let thy breasts be as clusters of the vine,
And the smell of thy countenance like apples;
And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine,
That glideth down smoothly for my beloved,
Moving gently the lips of those that are asleep.'

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I am my beloved's,
And his desire is toward me.
Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field;
Let us lodge in the villages.
Let us get up early to the vineyards;
Let us see whether the vine hath budded,
Whether the vine-blossom be opened,
And the pomegranates be in flower;
There will I give thee my love.
The mandrakes give forth fragrance,
And at our doors are all manner of precious fruits,
New and old,
Which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.

VIII

OH THAT thou wert as my brother,
That sucked the breasts of my mother!
When I should find thee without, I would kiss thee;
Yea, and none would despise me.
I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house,
That thou mightest instruct me;
I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine,
Of the juice of my pomegranate.
His left hand should be under my head,
And his right hand should embrace me.
'I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem:
Why should ye awaken, or stir up love,
Until it please?'

Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness,
Leaning upon her beloved?
Under the apple-tree I awakened thee;
There thy mother was in travail with thee;
There was she in travail and brought thee forth.

Set me as a seal upon thy heart,
As a seal upon thine arm;
For love is strong as death,
Jealousy is cruel as the grave;
The flashes thereof are flashes of fire,
A very flame of the LORD.
Many waters cannot quench love,
Neither can the floods drown it;
If a man would give all the substance of his house for love,
He would utterly be contemned.

We have a little sister,
And she hath no breasts;
What shall we do for our sister
In the day when she shall be spoken for?
If she be a wall,
We will build upon her a turret of silver;
And if she be a door,
We will enclose her with boards of cedar.

I am a wall,
And my breasts like the towers thereof;
Then was I in his eyes
As one that found peace.

Solomon had a vineyard at Baalhamon;
He gave over the vineyard unto keepers;
Every one for the fruit thereof
Brought in a thousand pieces of silver.
My vineyard, which is mine, is before me;
Thou, O Solomon, shalt have the thousand,
And those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.

Thou that dwellest in the gardens,
The companions hearken for thy voice:
'Cause me to hear it.'

Make haste, my beloved,
And be thou like to a gazelle or to a young hart
Upon the mountains of spices.

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ON THE HORIZON

THE METEORIC VELIKOVSKY

A Man Who Gave the World Pause

GERARD H. WILK

"AND he [Joshua] said in the sight of Israel: 'Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Aijalon' " (Josh. 10:12). To which Immanuel Velikovsky replied, quite a few centuries later: "It was the earth that stood still that day. . . ." It was quite a surprise. Now, the author of the best-selling *Worlds in Collision* (more than 100,000 copies) is about to put a new book on the market, *Ages in Chaos—A Reconstruction of Ancient History from the Exodus to King Akhnaton*. This one appears under the imprint of Doubleday, who adopted Velikovsky after his original publisher, Macmillan, had abandoned him under the fire of outraged scientific opinion. ("Fifty years ago such a book would have been laughed at," lamented Waldemar Kaempfert, "and now it is used as a weapon against science.") On the dust jacket of the new book is an authorized statement by Robert H. Pfeiffer, head of the Semitics department of Harvard University: "If Dr. Velikovsky is right, this volume is the greatest contribution to the investigation of ancient times ever written." Velikovsky himself does not expect such cautious sympathy from the academic fraternity at large. "This time the historians will attack me," says the tall, gray-haired, distinguished-looking man, with a friendly indulgence for what he regards as human weakness.

In spite of his preoccupation with comets running amuck, Velikovsky looks very much like a refined man of this world; he is no medieval mage buried under dusty folios; there are no owls, no obscure scrolls, no mysterious instruments in his comfortable middle-class apartment in uptown New York, which is not even overstocked with books. The strangest fact that I encountered about this Russian-born intellectual was his willingness to submit to the American custom of making tea with tea-bags. Ladies probably find him attractive, with his imposing head, high forehead, large Greek nose a bit pointed —the face of a dreamer, if it were not for a very determined chin. He is a superb but quiet talker, witty without being sarcastic, with a flair for attention-catching metaphors, and a good listener, too. He is affable to the point of being gently pitying to those who disagree with him.

For all his interest in the stars, Velikovsky does not believe in astrology, and he surely had not the faintest presentiment of what the celestial spheres had in store for him when he came to this country from Palestine in midsummer of 1939, a man forty-four years old, who had for the last sixteen of those years been a practicing physician. He came for a reason that often sends Americans scurrying abroad. "I felt it was the last

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JUST when everyone has pretty much recovered from the excitement of *Worlds in Collision*—that saga of the ancient encounter between the comet Venus and the planet Earth, as a result of which the earth stood still for a day—Immanuel Velikovsky will shortly be in the news again with his second book, *Ages in Chaos*. GERARD H. WILK, after several long interviews with Dr. Velikovsky, remains unable to judge the merits of the scientific controversies that his writings have provoked; but he did find Dr. Velikovsky to be a person of more than common interest—as the present article bears witness.

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chance of my life to devote myself to research—full-time research, that was my great desire. . . ."

IMMANUEL VELIKOVSKY was born on the tenth of June, 1895, in Vitebsk, Russia, the youngest of three brothers; he likes to remember that this was the year Theodor Herzl wrote his *Judenstaat*. Immanuel's father, Simon Velikovsky, had already long been a Zionist by then, belonging to the Hovevei Zion ("Lovers of Zion") movement. Simon had been born in 1859 in Mstislav, the grandson of Rabbi Jacob Hotimski, who traced his family tree back to Ezra the Scribe. Simon studied hard to become a rabbi, but he could not find it in his conscience to be loyal to every jot and tittle of the Law, and he left the Yeshiva at Mir where his father had sent him. Returning home, he encountered his boyhood friend S. M. Dubnow, who was later to win fame as a Jewish historian, and the two came to be intimate companions. Dubnow introduced Simon to the Haskalah (the Enlightenment movement), and Simon awakened in Dubnow an interest in the Jewish national idea. (Sixty years later Dubnow wrote about this mutual inspiration in the Hebrew periodical *Ha-aretz*.) With the help of a Russian-Hebrew dictionary, Simon Velikovsky learned Russian and soon became a learned autodidact in "Gentile" matters. To the astonishment of Mstislav, he applied to the House of Vogau—one of the most important mercantile firms in Moscow—for a job as its representative in the city of Smolensk; to the greater astonishment of Mstislav, Simon got the job, even though he refused to sign his contract on the Sabbath. Simon was soon steadily climbing the ladder of business success, taking on the way as his wife Bela Rachel Grodeski of Grodno, an unusual woman who, without any formal education, had a fluent command of several languages and a wide acquaintance with European culture.

"From his youth," says Immanuel Velikovsky, "my father had set himself three goals: to help make Hebrew a living language again, to redeem Israel, and to found a Jewish academy." To revive Hebrew, the older Velikovsky sponsored the institute Sfatenu, which published anthologies and dictionaries in Hebrew; he also established prizes for books interpreting the aims of Zionism—in 1904, during the Russo-Japanese war, when business was slack, he spent his last eight hundred rubles as prize money. In his old age, Simon became a writer himself; living in Palestine, and nearly seventy-five years old, he wrote two plays in Hebrew: *The Jew of Munich* and *Rabbi Akiba*. As a redeemer of Israel, he was a cofounder of the collective settlement Migdal in Galilee, and the sole founder of Ruhama in the Negev; in the latter, only individuals who spoke Hebrew were permitted to settle. Then, after the First World War, his son Immanuel helped him fulfill his third goal, by creating the publication *Scripta Universitatis*, in effect a forerunner of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Immanuel was brought up in a home where learning was more in esteem than money, and where a good deal of both was available. At four, he began to study Hebrew, at six, Russian. His mother tongue was German; Yiddish he never did master. At seven, he started the study of French, at twelve, Latin, and shortly thereafter English, in which language he now writes his books. When Immanuel was six, the Velikovsky family moved to Moscow on the insistence of his mother that he be enrolled in a good school. Only after he had passed the examination at Medvednikov Gymnasium four times, was he allowed to enter the school—the first three times he was rejected because he was a Jew. Finally, when he did get into the Gymnasium, he became something of a rebel there; twice he was on the verge of expulsion, and only his excellent marks—which were highest in mathematics and Russian—saved him. While still at school, he published a small volume of Russian verse and dreamed of becoming a Russian poet.

He completed his studies at the Gymnasium; but then, despite his high marks and his gold medal, the *numerus clausus* kept him from entering any Russian university. To his great delight, Immanuel was sent to study medicine abroad, at Montpellier in Southern France. There he found about five hundred young Russian Jewish students, of whom many were Zionists, and he shortly became the leader of their organization. The news from their families at home was anything but good. It was the time of the infamous Beilis ritual-murder trial in Kiev.

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The students at Montpellier took more and more to looking beyond the Mediterranean, and talking of the Promised Land. One morning, while Immanuel was lounging among the ruins of Charles Martel's castle, the urge to go to Palestine suddenly became irresistible; next day he gave notice to the university—it was the middle of the winter term, 1913—and he departed immediately.

"I WANDERED through the deserts, over the hills, I slept in *kvuzot,* I visited the ancient ruins. . . . It was a time when I was deeply religious." (He still maintains a kosher household.) But his mother insisted that he come back to Europe to finish his medical studies. This time he went to Edinburgh, where he took courses in medicine, botany, and zoology. The guest lecturer that year was Henri Bergson, discoursing on the *élan vital.* Velikovsky admits he did not understand him very well. But he did understand, and was fascinated by, London's Whitechapel. "It was for me a mystical region. I have always felt attached to poor Jews."

The outbreak of World War I found him home in Russia on his summer vacation. There was no possibility of getting abroad and the medical faculties still were closed to him. He finally enrolled at the so-called "Free University" in Moscow, created by the rector and some professors of the Moscow Imperial University who had resigned in protest against violations of academic autonomy. There he studied law, history, and economics. Later, after the Revolution, he was able to return to his original studies and in 1921 he received his degree as a doctor of medicine at the University of Moscow. Before completing his studies, he had published under the pen name of Immanuel Ramio a booklet on Jewish history, *The Third Exodus,* in which he predicted that the European Jews were threatened with a new deluge of hate and terror aiming at their annihilation, and in which he also prophesied the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.

In 1921, he and his parents left Russia. His parents went directly to Palestine, but Immanuel stayed over in Berlin, thinking the time ripe to put into practice his father's ideas of a Jewish academy. He was soon in touch with the leading personalities of the German Zionist movement, and particularly with Dr. Heinrich Loewe, a well-known scholar now living in Israel. Simon Velikovsky placed at his son's disposal the money for the founding of *Scripta Universitatis atque Bibliothecae Hierosolymitanarum,* which Dr. Loewe and Immanuel Velikovsky published jointly. Immanuel was then twenty-six years old, though managing to look much older with the help of a beard. Albert Einstein became the editor of one of the two parts of the *Scripta,* the mathematical-physical section, while the other part was dedicated to Hebraica-Orientalia. In the *Scripta,* contributions of outstanding Jewish scholars from all over the world were published in their original languages and in Hebrew translation. The volumes were sent to academies and universities in exchange for their publications, which were then given to the University Library in Jerusalem. One of those who encouraged the *Scripta* was Chaim Weizmann, who, according to Velikovsky, in 1923 asked the young man to become head of the new Hebrew University in Palestine. Velikovsky did not accept.

In Berlin the young publisher met a violinist, Elisheva Kramer, from Hamburg, and married her. (Later, in Palestine, Elisheva Velikovsky played first violin in the Palestine String Quartet. She is also a sculptor and painter, and this winter exhibited a limestone figure, "Caryatid," at the New York City Metropolitan Museum's "American Sculpture 1951" show—a national competitive exhibition.) They have two daughters, both born in Israel, both now in the United States, and both married. One, a physicist, lives in Princeton, after having served with the Israeli army during the War of Liberation. The other teaches art at the University of Judaism in Los Angeles.

SHORTLY after their marriage the Velikovskys left Berlin. "I went to Palestine with my wife and the printed volumes of the *Scripta.* On the day the Hebrew University was opened, the *Scripta* was laid on the table before Lord Balfour. The wind from the Dead Sea played in its pages. . . ." During the next sixteen years the Velikovskys lived first in Haifa, then in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. He was a general practitioner but later, after a course of study in Vienna—under Dr. Wilhelm Stekel—he specialized in psychoanalysis. "Many patients . . . no time

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for research and writing. . . ." He did manage to write some medical papers and to go for a time to Zurich for courses on brain physiology. Yet he more and more had the sense that "life runs away." He was forty-four years old and quite well off, but he felt that he had not yet accomplished anything of importance; he experienced what in the German language is vividly referred to as *Torschlusspanik*—"fear of the closing of the gate." He made up his mind to go to America to devote himself to full-time research. In the summer of 1939 the Velikovsky family arrived in New York.

In Velikovsky's trunk there was a manuscript he hoped to finish, on "Freud and His Heroes." He had known Freud personally, had been in correspondence with him, and in 1932 had invited him to Palestine; Freud had declined, explaining that he was too ill to travel and had to stay in the *Behaglichkeit* of his house in Vienna. Velikovsky had previously re-interpreted Freud's own dreams as given in his writings, his thesis being that at the time he wrote his *Interpretation of Dreams* Freud was much occupied with the question of whether or not he should remain a Jew. Velikovsky called this study "The Dreams Freud Dreamed," and it was published in October 1941 in the *Psychoanalytic Review*. In New York, attempting to finish his work on "Freud and His Heroes," Velikovsky met some difficulties. Two of Freud's "heroes," Oedipus and Ikhnaton, yielded easily to his historical research and their lives seemed to make an interesting story, quite pertinent to the story of Freud's own life. But the third hero, Moses, brought him up against some biographical and historical riddles he could not solve, for all his wearying hours at the library of Columbia University.

Meanwhile war had come to Europe, and in April 1940 the Velikovskys decided to go home to Palestine. But on the day before they were to board ship, Velikovsky dropped in on a publisher to whom Professor Horace M. Kallen had given the unfinished manuscript of "Freud and His Heroes." In the office he found a lady who turned out to be the publisher's wife and secretary; she told him that her husband would be happy to publish his work and asked him to postpone his departure in order to sign the contract. Velikovsky, his luggage packed, at first refused; but the publisher called him at home that evening and talked excitedly about the success the book was bound to have. The ship sailed the next day without the Velikovskys, who were busy unpacking. They had just about finished when they learned that the publisher had changed his mind and would offer no contract until the manuscript was completed.

Preparations for departure were started all over again. This time, fate intervened in the person of a rabbi bringing greetings from a friend. Leisurely, the man of God and the man of Freud sat and talked, overlooking the Hudson and discussing the Jordan. Velikovsky brought up a question that had been bothering him for a long time: "Why did nobody thoroughly examine the origin of the Dead Sea?" The rabbi did not know, but Velikovsky kept to the subject. Had there not been a geological change? At the time of the patriarchs, this region is spoken of as a valley, the "vale of Siddim" (Gen. 14:3). But in Exodus the same region is already spoken of as the Dead Sea. What had changed the valley into a salty sea? What had happened in the epoch between the patriarchs and the Exodus? Suddenly Velikovsky remembered a book, a geological, geographical, and historical account of the Negev—his father had given it to him on his fortieth birthday. Its author, a young Hebrew student named Bar Droma, had made reference in the book to a theory which described Mount Sinai as having once been a volcano. Velikovsky mentioned this theory to the rabbi, and all of a sudden the idea of a "Great Catastrophe" struck him—an idea that would help explain the many riddles facing the scholar at work on the historical Moses, the Exodus, the plagues. Here was what was needed to finish his missing chapter on Moses in "Freud and His Heroes." Many more ships sailed to Palestine without the Velikovsky family.

VELIKOVSKY went back to work. Catalogues, encyclopedias, bibliographies, books and books—geographical, geological, historical—he read them before sunrise at home (he is an early riser, and is not able to work late at night) and all day at the Columbia library. Finally he found a book, a translation of the Ipuwer Papyrus, in which he read: "The water in the river turned to blood. . . ."

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Moreover, every one of the Biblical plagues was mentioned. He wrote to Professor J. Garstang, the excavator of Jericho, and showed him the collated texts from the Papyrus and from the Bible. "It reads as if one is the copy of the other—Bible and Ipuwer Papyrus," answered the professor. There was a problem, however. According to the accepted time-table of the historians, the Ipuwer Papyrus was written many centuries before the Exodus. "I was in conflict with the conventional history by several hundred years. . . . Six hundred lost years with the Jews, or six hundred ghost years with the Egyptians?"

Suddenly "everything came together." The difference in time was there, and could not be denied—if one followed conventional history. But there was an amazing coincidence of names and events in Egyptian and Biblical sources. The two historians coincided in their account of every generation, but there was a constant six hundred years' difference. Working feverishly, Velikovsky came up with more and more parallel facts, and finally decided that the accepted chronology of Egyptian history was wrong, and that he would have to reconstruct anew the history of Egypt's Middle Kingdom. He put aside Freud and his heroes to work on the book just coming out, *Ages in Chaos.*

Several months later, he found the clue to an answer to the second question: What was the nature of the catastrophes recorded in the Bible and the Egyptian papyri? It was in the Bible's account of Joshua ben Nun pursuing the Canaanite kings at Beth-horon: "And the sun stayed in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day" (Joshua 10:13). And there were the earlier verses about the large stones. . . . Metaphor, or ancient memory of natural catastrophes? "Suddenly I had the feeling the verses spoke of facts, of a natural catastrophe that really had happened. . . ." Such a catastrophe could not have been a local event, and again he plunged into ancient sources, seeking for mention of similar occurrences east or west of Palestine. "I was lucky to come across the books of Abbé Brasseur. His work on the Mayas and other aborigines of America described similar events." Diligently, Velikovsky read hundreds of books, copying excerpts in longhand in notebooks that resemble the copy books of a model college student (for *Ages in Chaos,* he took notes from more than four thousand books). And in some way, slowly, the conviction grew in him that a comet had come into collision with the earth, causing destruction in a measure unheard of and nearly unbelievable. To astronomers—as Velikovsky happened to know—such an event is incredible. But the sources seemed to point to it, and Velikovsky found himself, after every day's research, submitting more and more to the charm of his comet, reluctant though he was to come into conflict with the astronomers. And soon the comet itself took on an identity: it was Venus, what is now our friendly planet Venus, disengaging herself thirty-five hundred years ago from Jupiter, colliding with the earth and with Mars. There was a time, concluded Velikovsky, when the very careful and cautious old watchers in the night did not know anything about a planet Venus; it became visible only at the beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C.E.

So was born *Worlds in Collision,* "a pleasant work in between," while he still labored on *Ages in Chaos.*

For eleven years Velikovsky worked on his first two books—"Eleven years, during which I was the first and the last in the library. I allowed myself no Sabbath, no summer vacation. My money that I had brought over from Palestine became exhausted. My other means there were frozen. Sometimes I even tried to save a nickel and took the Broadway bus instead of the Fifth Avenue bus with its beautiful ride on Riverside Drive. If I had practiced psychoanalysis, I could easily have had a good income. But I was too much absorbed in my ideas and in my work." Still, he did find time for other activities. When the situation in Palestine became critical just before the new state was born, he discovered in himself a gift for journalism. He sent, under the pen name of "Observer," an article to the editor of the New York *Post* who, without knowing anything about "Observer," published it on November 25, 1947. The editor found more articles by the mysterious "Observer" in his mail and printed them, too, on the editorial page; it was some time before editor and author came to know each other. Altogether, Velikovsky wrote fifty colorful, well-in-

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formed, and impressive articles, which found a great many readers. And when the UN planned sanctions against Israel, he went to Paris, where the Assembly was meeting, and in a corridor he got hold of Dr. Ralph Bunche and exhorted him for forty minutes.

Then he came back to New York and his theories. *Harper's, Collier's,* and *Reader's Digest* brought out in the first months of 1950 articles about, and condensations of, the strange story of Venus the comet. They caused a great commotion. Scientists were outraged, the public curious. It had been a long time since a catastrophic theory of history had reared its head—not, in fact, since the idea of evolution had come to dominate men's minds. Back in 1697, Sir Thomas Burnet explained, in *The Theory of the Earth,* that a comet had caused the Deluge. "We have heard," writes Sir Thomas, "as it were a Cry of Fire, throughout all Antiquity and throughout all people of the earth. Those alarums are sometimes false or make a greater noise than the thing deserves. I never trust Antiquity barely upon its own account, but always require a second witness either from Nature or from Scripture. . . ." He expected a new comet to become active at the End of Days, destroying the earth, but not the whole universe, for there would have to be a region where the Last Judgment could take place. A friend of Newton's, William Whiston, had similar ideas.

Now, in the 20th century, the notion of catastrophe has again become thinkable, even popular, for obvious reasons. Except that where Burnet and Whiston called upon nature and Scripture to verify recorded history, Velikovsky calls upon nature and the ancients to verify Scripture. But he denies that he ever had the intention or wish to confirm the Bible. He looks, he says, for scientific truth, and he is certainly sincere. Yet perhaps even he might not be offended if, some day, a fellow psychoanalyst should study Velikovsky as Velikovsky studied Freud, and reinterpret the dreams Velikovsky dreamed.

THE KNIFE IN THE GROUND

RALPH GORDON

BEHIND the house, the informal bare ground wet
With shadow lies, the morning through, and there
At the house well, an old-handled knife, deep set

Into the earth, stands. "Now watch out, take care,
Children, don't pull it out," Nana says; "it's got
Three days to stand yet." With an important air,

She leads us off: "It's been in the wrong pot,
And gotten itself *treif;* seven days in the ground
Will fix that." Walking carefully so as not

To break the charm, we retreat, feeling the profound
Purity of the earth, the root-clean soil
Making things living and sweet; the silence around

Breathes of it too, and the knife resting from toil,
And the wind driving the litter into a coil.

RALPH GORDON'S poems have appeared frequently in these pages, as well as in the *Atlantic Monthly* and other periodicals.

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THE STUDY OF MAN

THE NEW HISTORIANS OF ISRAEL

Changing Perspectives and Flourishing Scholarship

H. SCHMIDT

IN THE Israel of today, a burned-out armored car, a Crusaders' castle, a Bronze Age fortification, a cave of Paleolithic man —all these may be found along the same mountain trail. A valley made up of a few trees and thistles may carry the scars of the battles of three millennia. Upon this scene, in the 20's and 30's, came more than a few Jewish historians, trained and equipped in the great European universities, but with their spirit of inquiry whetted by Zionist convictions. The result has been a flowering of historical studies in Israel.

Though generally set down in Hebrew, the cast of this work is given by the traditions of political idealism and national romanticism deriving from the Eastern and Central European origins of the scholars involved. The beginnings of modern Jewish historiography, it must be remembered, are intimately connected with German history as it was written by German historians in the 19th century. These latter very often deliberately tried to instill a strong national consciousness in a nation that had hardly felt it before the 19th century. The giants of Jewish historiography, Heinrich Graetz and Simon Dubnow, followed in the footsteps of the Germans. As a result, in Israel today the Jewish national identity is the foremost object of historical interest, and the Jewish nation-state is regarded in terms of such ideas as history's inner destiny. This also means that liberty is thought of as belonging to the nation rather than the individual, and that duty and morality are likewise matters more of nationality than individuality.

The Israeli outlook on Jewish and world history is in large measure the product of the work of two scholars, Ben Zion Dinaburg, the present Minister of Education, and Joseph Klausner. Also formidable in their influence—and achievement—are Yitzhak Baer and Gershom Scholem. All four are at one in viewing the events of the last century or two as part of a necessary and logical process by which the Jewish nation emerged from the ghetto and, after failing to integrate itself in an anti-Semitic Western society, gave rise to a national movement culminating in a national state.

In such an intellectual environment, with its ardent, all-pervasive nationalism, the study of history is assured of its importance. It is taken for granted that the young Israeli cannot fulfill his obligations as a citizen unless he has an awareness of the nation's past and future and has plumbed the depths of the "historical mission of national redemption." In other words, Israel stands today where many small states stood when they first knew national

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THE ISRAELI historian is only one of a number of specialists whose work, written in a language that is rarely studied in the West, is inaccessible to his non-Jewish—and many of his Jewish—colleagues. Yet in many areas, and not in Jewish history alone, Israeli scholars have made important contributions to historical knowledge. H. SCHMIDT, whose article "A Broader Approach to Jewish History" was published in this department in December 1949, here makes available a brief, but comprehensive as well as critical, survey of the work of Israeli scholars in post-Biblical, medieval, and modern history. Mr. Schmidt was born in Germany in 1916, studied at the University of Breslau (and at the Rabbinical Seminary there), at the University of London, and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He is now at Oxford, where he holds a British Council research scholarship in modern history.

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sovereignty. German and Slavonic historical thought, the mood of which is fixed by the haunting sense of an unfulfilled national mission, is paralleled at many points in modern Israel.

But the Israelis, being after all Jews, are not an isolated Balkan people, and not all Israeli scholars have abandoned their historic role as intellectual middlemen among the world's cultures. There are those who rival a Treitschke in their passionate, patriotic enthusiasm, but there are also Israeli historians whose approach is closer to the factual, detached, and universal one of a Ranke. These latter refuse to accept the national consciousness as the sole starting point of Jewish historical inquiry, and they regard it as only one among other possible subjects of research. They view the history of the Jews as they would that of any other group—that is, chiefly in its significance for an understanding of the development of humanity in general. There exists no Jewish problem, they maintain, that is not also a problem of general history—and vice versa.

The nationalist historians, however, are by far in the majority in Israel; and they place one group, the Jews, and one country, Palestine, in the center of their stage, regarding world history as of real moment only insofar as it affects either. Most of the research and writing on Jewish history in Israel is the product of this outlook.*

HISTORICAL scholarship in Israel is reported almost exclusively in Hebrew, though this denies the rest of the scholarly world access to important and original contributions. Such a defiant exclusiveness is certainly a consequence of the fact that the Hebraization of academic life was achieved only after long years of persistent endeavor. The Israeli historian has had to help create the language he was using; for Hebrew did not, until quite recently, have terms for such concepts as *fief, guild,* or *enclosure,* let alone equivalents for such words as *dolichocephalic, mesolithic,* and the rest of the newly swollen vocabulary of archeology and pre-history. And even when the scholar had successfully invented the desired Hebrew term, this did not mean that the printer understood it; in the early days of the Hebrew University, many a scholar sat with the printer, personally supervising the realization in Hebrew orthography of his innovations. Mistakes were inevitable. Even today some Israeli students believe East Anglia to be the eastern part of England.

Recently, things have become somewhat easier. Such institutions as the Bialik Foundation, the Rav Kuk Foundation, and the Hebrew University Press (now called the Magnes Press) have taken a good part of the burden of standardizing scholarly language out of the hands of the writer. Four journals are devoted to the publication and criticism of historical work—*Zion*, edited by Baer, Dinaburg, and I. Halpern; *Tarbiz*, edited by J. N. Epstein; *Sinai*, edited by J. L. Maimon; and *Kiryat Sefer*, the chief bibliographical periodical of the National Library. And some scholarly books—such as Yehezkel Kaufmann's history of the Jewish religion—have found a surprisingly large public in Israel.

The political convulsions of the last fifteen years have, however, added to the historian's difficulties. Today archeologists and Oriental historians from Israel cannot travel and work in Arab countries; thus they have less freedom and opportunity than their Western colleagues. The National Library on Mt. Scopus cannot be entered, and one has to resort to the most desperate stratagems to get books for one's work.

Nevertheless, a sizable amount of valuable historical literature has been produced in Israel. In surveying these achievements, this article must, however, confine itself to main trends and characteristics. Previous articles in this magazine by such competent authorities as W. F. Albright and H. L. Ginsberg have already appraised the contributions of Israeli scholars to our knowledge of the Biblical period (see "New Trends in Biblical Criticism" in the September 1950 issue, and "The Rediscovery of Civilization" in the December 1948 issue). Here we have chosen to limit ourselves to the work of Israeli scholars in post-Biblical history, Jewish and non-Jewish; this material, while inevitably less dramatic, offers an opportunity for observing how the two main orientations in Israeli historical study come to grips with the problem of the relations of Jews to the non-Jewish world.

The Greek and Roman World

THE struggle of the Jews against the West, first in the form of Hellenism and then in that of Roman imperialism, is one of the major

* For a more complete characterization of these two different approaches, see an earlier article by the same author published in COMMENTARY in the December 1949 issue.

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themes of Israeli historians. It is the political and military rather than the spiritual side of these conflicts that is emphasized, and the issue is seen as involving less "the law of the state of God," as Bickermann puts it, than the desire to maintain a territorial state and political power. This Zionist-motivated reaction to the predominating previous view, which saw the struggle between Israel and the Greco-Roman world in predominantly religious terms, does help right the balance, even though it is rather obviously affected by recent events in Palestine.

The period of the Second Temple has been treated afresh by Joseph Klausner, whose work on Jesus and Paul has already gained the attention of an international public. His recent five-volume study* of the period from 586 B.C.E. to 73 C.E., which masterfully sums up the research of the last three decades, has not yet been translated, however. Klausner's linguistic knowledge, ranging from Assyrian to Hellenistic Greek, and his command of studies in a multitude of fields, which have to be fitted like jigsaw-puzzle pieces into the over-all picture, are unique; only a scholar who gave this period forty years of devoted study could have written such a work.

But Klausner is also a political man and has never drawn a sharp line between agitation and scholarship. His hold on the general public—and particularly the younger part of it—has always been greater than his influence upon scholars; nor has he ever made any bones about the fact that he writes of the past with an eye to the present. There was a time when he said Rome, but meant Britain under the "consulships" of Churchill and Bevin—because, as he repeatedly taught, "there is no new thing under the sun." Thus he lectures and writes as an enthusiastic Hebrew nationalist for other enthusiastic Hebrew nationalists. Jewry before the Babylonian Exile and after is, to him, the same nation, and one not radically different in temper and problems from the present Israel. The inevitable difficulties of this identification are ignored. If the national revival following the Babylonian Exile was so complete, and included a deliberate restoration of the Hebrew language, how is it that so many Babylonian customs, so many foreign words—Aramaic, Babylonian, Greek, and others—crept in? How is it that, not Hebrew, but Aramaic and, later, colloquial Greek became the vernacular language, even during the Maccabean period of "national" liberation? If national sentiment was really as strong as Klausner wants us to believe, how is it that in the Maccabean period a Jewish party allied itself with the Syrians and had to be subdued by foreign mercenaries hired by Alexander Jannaeus? Klausner's answer—that such Jews were traitors to the fatherland—compels him to expand his list of traitors inordinately after the time when the little state came into the orbit of Rome.

A strong desire to demonstrate that the Jewish community in Palestine continued to exist and remain vigorous after the destruction of the Second Temple pervades the work of another Israeli historian studying the same period, M. Avi Yonah, who has devoted his attention to the economic and social history of the Jews in Palestine during the Roman and Byzantine periods. The same tendency to demonstrate the continuity of Jewish life in Palestine runs through an important collection of sources dealing with Jews in Palestine from the destruction of the Second Temple to the rise of modern Zionism. So far, two volumes of this basic collection, compiled under the sponsorship of the Jewish Historical and Ethnological Society, have been published, covering the period from 70 to 1099 C.E.

In this period the Jewish Diaspora grew, with its center in Egypt. V. Tcherikover has made the Jews of Egypt his particular province, and has greatly enriched our knowledge through his study of the hundreds of papyri and ostraca that have been uncovered of late and which refer to Egyptian Jewry in the Roman and Byzantine periods. These documents are to be published by him as a *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*, but his main conclusions from them are summed up in a work on the Jews of Hellenistic Egypt. We learn from this work, for example, that Jewish settlements were scattered all over Egypt in these periods, not only in Alexandria; and that Jews were active in agriculture, in administration, and in the army, and were not, as previously supposed, primarily merchants. The description of the Jewish struggle for full civil rights, culminating in a desperate uprising in 115-117 C.E. which threw the entire country into a state of war before being finally suppressed—all this, besides contributing to our historical knowledge, makes fascinating reading.

* The works referred to in this article, unless otherwise noted, are in Hebrew, and have been published in Jerusalem or Tel Aviv in the past few years. Full titles and bibliographical information are available at COMMENTARY to interested readers.

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THOUGH political and economic conditions have been given special attention by Israeli historians, the significant cultural interpenetration of Hellenism and Judaism has by no means been ignored. A full appreciation of this phenomenon demands a thorough grounding in Greek and Jewish learning, together with a possession of the tools of philological textual criticism. This rare combination of competences is found in the work of I. Heinemann, who is a religious philosopher as well as a scholar, and has never been content to stake out a small preserve within which to concentrate his interests. Heinemann's fame was established while he was still in Germany by a study of Philo's Greek and Jewish cultural background, and he has continued, in Israel, to occupy himself with the influences of Greek thought on ancient and medieval Jewish writers and philosophers, such as Flavius Josephus (in *Zion*, 1939-40) and Judah Halevi (in *Zion*, 1944-45). His recent book on the Aggada analyzes its relation to the Bible, its historical philosophy, and its links with Greek literature, and offers an immense store of knowledge in which Torah, mystical and rabbinical thought, Kant and Nietzsche have all been assimilated without the loss in depth that generally accompanies such breadth. In such a work the reader breathes a religious rather than political atmosphere, for Heinemann's mental image of Israel is centered on its religious ethos, as distinct from the territorial and political ethos so prominent in the works of other Israeli scholars.

Research on the Roman period has recently suffered from the untimely death of three scholars: H. J. Lewy, who was engaged in a comprehensive treatment—sections of which have been published—of the views of the Jews held by ancient peoples; A. Gulak, who was at work on the history of Jewish law in the Talmudic era, and had published a volume on the "law of obligation"; and G. Allon, who was exploring the social life of the Jews in Talmudic Palestine. Other work by Jewish scholars on this period that demands at least a brief reference includes A. Shalit's introduction and notes to his Hebrew translation of Flavius Josephus, S. Yeivin's study of Bar Kochba's revolt, and the elaborate examination of the Greek inscriptions in Palestine by M. Schwabe demonstrating that the Jews in Palestine spoke colloquial Greek but did not know Greek literature. Besides the work of historians proper, there is, of course, a wealth of historical knowledge on the post-Biblical period in the reports of Israeli archeologists, which can be found in the *Bulletin and Journal of the Israel Exploration Society*, formerly the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society, edited by A. Heifenberg, M. Avi Yonah, and B. Maisler.

The preponderant concern of the Israeli historian in dealing with the Greek and Roman world is naturally with Palestine and the Jews, but there is an increasing interest in non-Jewish subjects too. Here two examples must stand for many more. A. Fuks, a pupil of M. Schwabe, has published studies on the politics of 5th-century Athens in *Tarbiz*, and Chaim Wirszubski, a pupil of V. Tcherikover, has studied the political concepts of early imperial Rome and analyzed the meaning of the word "liberty" in Tacitus. His work has appeared in England: *Libertas as a Political Idea at Rome* (Cambridge Classical Studies, 1950).

The Middle Ages

THE study of Jewish medieval history in Europe and the Moslem world demands a synthesis of Jewish and "non-Jewish" learning that was not to be found among Jewish scholars until recent times. Past generations have had to rely either on great rabbinic scholars, who had only a general knowledge of the history of the Church and the structure of medieval society, or on medieval scholars, to whom rabbinical and Cabalistic literature was a *terra incognita*, and one often considered beneath their dignity. Medieval research in Israel today demands this twofold competence and sets itself very high standards as regards both. No one feels that enough spadework has as yet been done to justify attempting a large-scale general narrative history, and a good deal of the present work in the field is being devoted to just this spadework.

For example: S. Assaf has published over the years since 1927 important collections of sources on the history of Jewish education, and of Arabic sources and Gaonic *responsa* compiled from the Cairo Genizah. Yitzhak Baer, recognized as Israel's foremost historian of medieval Jewry, has made available two volumes of documents selected from Spanish archives. I. Halpern has collected the regulations governing Jewish life issued by the Council of the Four Lands, the central organization of Polish Jewry from the 16th to the 18th centuries. A. Yaari has collected letters, memoirs, and accounts of

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medieval travelers in Palestine, and published them in a pleasing modern Hebrew that spares the reader the many obscure phrases—some of them even of Mongol and Tartar origin—that are to be found in the original material. New critical editions of such medieval chronicles and histories as *Shevet Yehuda, Sipur David Reubeni,* and *Megilat Ahimaaz* have been published.

Israeli historical study of the Jewish Middle Ages stresses the theme of national continuity by emphasizing the autonomy of the Jewish communities, their close relations with Palestine, the common form taken by their basic institutions, and the emotional strength of mystical and Messianic movements.

Baer's history of the Jews in Christian Spain tells their story from the beginning up to the final crisis in 1492. Whereas the American work on the same subject written by A. Neumann (Philadelphia, 1944) emphasized the social and economic side of Jewish life in Spain, Baer shows greater interest in its spiritual and intellectual aspects, using the poetry of the Spanish Jews as a fruitful historical source. We thus learn more than we ever knew of the non-rationalistic forces influencing Spanish Jewry—its mystical thought and religious conflicts, and the impact of the approaching crisis of the expulsion. Baer's work on the medieval Jewish community and its origin (the latest article on this topic was published in *Zion,* 1950) reveals a constant awareness of the history of non-Jewish institutions, especially those of the early medieval city. The identity of development between the Jewish community and the early medieval city is often too striking to be overlooked; occasionally the Jewish institution preceded the Christian by some generations. Can it be that the medieval Christian town took a leaf from the book of the Jewish community in laying its foundations? Baer confines himself to drawing attention to this question without attempting a final answer.

The other large work of synthesis in the field of Jewish medieval studies deals with mystical thought, which is the particular province of Gershom Scholem, whose *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* is available in English (his other works remain for the most part untranslated). Scholem has traced the course of mystical thought from the teachers of the Mishnah in the 2nd century C.E. to the Hasidim, and has established a continuity throughout this long stretch of time that had never been suspected before. The great Jewish historians of the 19th century, Graetz, Zunz, and Jost, were handicapped by their rationalistic bias in understanding Jewish mysticism; they considered the false messiahs, Sabbatai Zevi and Jacob Frank, as simply swindlers. But Scholem tries to explain how it was that they could move masses and become a historical factor in the 16th and 17th centuries. He finds his answer, first, in a significant underground current of Jewish mystical thought that had absorbed Gnostic elements and showed points of contact with other Christian heresies; and, second, in the striving for deliverance from the ghetto, for freedom in which to lead a constructive life; this impulse, after the discrediting of the last remnants of Sabbatianism and Frankism among the Jewish populace, was to find its outlet in the Haskalah and Zionism.

ISRAEL is a natural center for the study of Arabic thought and history. The School of Oriental Studies of the Hebrew University, directed by S. D. Goitein, is today doing some extremely important research in Middle Eastern history. It is, for example, engaged in the compilation of a concordance of ancient Arabic poetry and is in process of publishing the 9th-century historical masterpiece of the Arab Al-Baladhuri. A. N. Poliak, a graduate of the school, has written a history of the Arabs in Hebrew and a detailed study of feudalism in the Levant in English (*Feudalism in Egypt, Syria, Palestine, and the Lebanon,* London, 1939). Special mention must be made, too, of Professor Goitein's studies in the periodical *Islamic Culture*—published in Hyderabad, India—on the social aspects of the Moslem state and on the origins of the vizierate, which he finds in the household of the primitive Arab chieftain.

The Mamelukes, who ruled Palestine from 1291 to 1516, have so far remained relatively obscure, but we know more about their warrior state today because of the work of three Israeli historians: L. A. Mayer, who studied and collected their heraldry and coins; D. Ayalon, who studied their military system; and E. Strauss, who on the basis of Arabic sources has put together a coherent picture of the social status of non-Moslem minorities under their rule. Combining these with Jewish and Christian medieval sources, Strauss has also just presented us with a two-volume *History of the Jews in Egypt and Syria, 1250-1517,* which is certain to re-

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main a basic work for a long time. It may be asked whether the lives of the Jews under Mameluke rule in those obscure centuries is of sufficient significance to merit such an exhaustive study. Strauss answers the question in the affirmative; for at the beginning of this period he finds flourishing and productive Jewish communities, while at the end there are only those petrified Oriental Jewries that had to wait for Zionism before re-entering history. The causes of their decline raise an important historical problem to whose solution Strauss has devoted himself.

Israel is also an unrivaled center for the study of the Jewish communities of the Middle East. S. D. Goitein's work on the Jews of Yemen, W. Fischel's, H. Polotsky's, and J. Rivlin's work on the Jews of Persia and Central Asia, and H. S. Hirschberg's history of the Jews of Arabia during the first thousand years of the Christian Era have opened up the still little-surveyed continent of Oriental Jewry. These Jews already make up one half of Israel and, especially in view of recent events, are bound to attract ever increasing attention from Western Jews and Israeli historians.

One of the most interesting phases of Palestine's history is those scant two centuries from 1099 to 1291 C.E., in which it formed the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, ruled by the Crusaders and their descendants. Their castles and fortresses, their churches, and especially their documents can hardly leave the historian indifferent. Ever since Baer began teaching medieval history at the Hebrew University, this period has been accorded special prominence because it possesses the great educational value of serving as an introduction to medieval Europe for the Hebrew student. J. Prawer's history of the Latin Kingdom, inspired by Baer's teaching, presents an account of its administration, commercial relations, provincial borders, population, army, churches, and agriculture, illustrated with maps, photographs, and drawings; all these show that Palestine in those days exhibited one of the purest examples of European feudal structure.

Modern History

THOUGH in the present mental climate of Israel most of the work on modern Jewish history is invariably written from a strong Zionist interest, no good over-all history of Zionism has as yet been produced in Hebrew. Important monographic work has, however, been published by Dinaburg, the leading student of modern Jewish history in Israel, who has taught and written on Hasidism, on the forerunners of Zionism, on such figures as Ber Borochov and M. Ussishkin, and on the ideological motives of the successive waves of Jewish immigration to Palestine. Modern Jewish history, as seen by Dinaburg, presents one main line leading to a single inevitable and logical end: the State of Israel. The five million Jews of America have no place at all in his story, and the student brought up on the logic of such a history does not find it easy to understand how it is that many millions of Jews have preferred to live outside of Palestine even when they had the chance to go there. What kind of Jews, he asks, are those who choose to stay in "Exile" out of their own free will? The Israeli historian who can answer that question in such a way as to heal rather than widen the present breach between Israel and the Diaspora is yet to be found.

A. Bein's study of Herzl, his history of Zionist settlement in Palestine, and M. Medsini's and N. M. Gelber's work on Zionist diplomacy and policy will all be very useful for a future general appraisal of Zionism. At the moment, however, its historians are chiefly concerned with safeguarding archives and collecting and editing the most important source documents. In this area the Zionist Central Archives, under the direction of G. Herlitz and A. Bein, stands out as an invaluable research center where a vast array of documents, records, and newspapers can be found. In it are also the private papers of Herzl, Nordau, Zangwill, Ben Yehuda, Arlosoroff, Ussishkin, and many other important figures in the history of Zionism.

While the modern historians mentioned up to this point write mainly for a Jewish and Zionist public, the aforementioned Israeli historians who reject the division of history into national compartments have been gaining an increasing audience in the Western world at large because—and this is no accident—most of their work is published in English.

The leading figure of this group is R. Koebner, known to the historians of Western Europe for his comprehensive chapter on the settlement of Europe that opens the *Cambridge Economic History*. Recently, he has addressed himself to the problem of the rise of such universal concepts and ideas as "modern" and "Western." These terms are so much a part of our language today that it is a little startling to have Koebner ask, as he recently has in an article in the

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Cambridge Journal (January 1951), so basic a query as where the term "Western civilization" originated—and how and why it has become popular. This study is the second of a series he plans to publish on the historical and political concepts of modern times (the first, on "Imperialism," appeared in the *British Economic History Review,* September 1949).

Koebner's many students, like himself, orient their researches toward the major forces shaping our world today rather than to the problems of Israel and Jews alone. Y. Talmon's *The Origin of Totalitarian Democracy* (London, 1952) traces the features of a "democracy" that is abstract, messianic, and intolerant of individual liberty back to the French Revolution. The book has been very well received in England and will appear shortly in America. M. Seliger has dealt in a Hebrew study with the role of the great powers in the Middle East at the time of Mehemet Ali, the adventurer who ruled Egypt in the first half of the 19th century, and is engaged in work on the French historians of the 19th century. U. Heyd has studied the ideological and cultural background of Kemalism in modern Turkey (*Foundations of Turkish Nationalism,* London, 1950). All in all, the work of Koebner and his students gives promise of the rise of a significant school of modern historians in Israel, who will be free from the strong nationalism that inevitably makes so much of Israeli scholarship parochial, and who will be capable of taking their place beside the best historians of Western Europe.

At this juncture, the future tasks of the Israeli historian stretch out in the mind's eye as both numerous and attractive. A comprehensive history of Zionism will demand a team of devoted scholars; the history of Palestine under the Mandate, on the basis of all the available documents and sources, still remains to be written; the struggle for the Jewish state and the war with the Arab nations has been treated journalistically many times, mostly with a pro-Zionist bias, but has not yet been the subject of serious history. All this, quite aside from the work in ancient and medieval history that remains to be done.

Finally, a word must be said about the Israeli student of history. Without that student, the historical scholar would be deprived of the encouraging and enthusiastic response that has sustained him in his work despite the crippling research conditions of the last four years. The student's lot is much harder than that of his counterpart in Europe or America, but he possesses a devotion and talent that are sufficient not only to spur him on but to serve as a constant inspiration to his teachers, who are able to feel that their lectures and work are worth all the hardships that scholarly work entails in a struggling state, where even the sheets of paper on which to write a lecture are hard to come by. There are not enough books and there is not enough money in Israel, but there are enough young minds in which a vision of the human past and future may be planted, and who may be counted on to pass on this vision to their own pupils. This, in the extreme austerity of present-day Israel, is the historian's chief compensation.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Judaism and the Jewish People

To the Editor of Commentary:

I should like to comment on Mr. Himmelfarb's review of my *A Partisan History of Judaism* in the February 1952 issue of Commentary.

1. Mr. Himmelfarb's "review" nowhere states the position I have taken in the book. This, he might have seen at least as an obligation—and then felt perfectly free to be as critical of that position as he chose.

2. Mr. Himmelfarb's "review" most nearly approaches what he apparently considers to be a resumé of the book's thesis when he says, categorically, that I "would empty Judaism of any content at all."

The whole thesis of the book is that the content of Judaism, surviving "peoplehood" (nationhood) and the particularistic customs, ceremonies, or ritual of any one time or place, is to be found in the immortal and transcending ethical insights of the literary Prophets; and that it was the spiritual descendants of these men who sustained Judaism.

If this affirmation is to "empty Judaism of any content at all," then perhaps Mr. Himmelfarb owes it to the world—or at least to Jews—to delineate the content of Judaism. Is it to be found in praying in Hebrew? Then let us rule out the large numbers of Jews who today—and for years past—have spoken their prayers in languages they understand. Is the content of Judaism to be found in the "peoplehood" with which Mr. Himmelfarb is so concerned? Mr. Ben Gurion's? Kaufmann Kohler's? Samuel Shulman's? What does the term mean? And to whom? Can Judaism survive without deification of this particularism—whatever it may mean—as Judaism has survived while other particularisms have changed or passed? Or is Judaism, after all, a tribalism, in which worship of God without worship of "peoplehood" is a heresy? And even if "peoplehood" has been regarded as unexpendable in the past (which I do not admit to be so in any realistic and practical sense) must it remain as one of the immutables of Judaism? And if so, who is prepared today to make the concept a meaningful part of the lives of those Jews who no longer consider themselves a "chosen people," or their Judaism a religion superior to all other faiths?

Mr. Himmelfarb to the contrary notwithstanding, Judaism is not now and never has been one "seamless web." If it has not been a constant struggle, visible on every page of its history, between the "universal and the particular," then Mr. Himmelfarb owes the world a new interpretation of the conflicts between the Prophets and the Priests; between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; between the Maimunists and the anti-Maimunists; between Isaac M. Wise and Isaac Leeser; between any Orthodox and Reform congregation in any small community (and some large ones) in America today.

3. Mr. Himmelfarb's straining for places to attack, despite his seeming philosophical detachment, is nowhere more evident than in his —and they are his—lines about what I am supposed to have said about Deborah and the State of Israel. Mr. Himmelfarb has "assimilation" on the brain. I nowhere "disapprove" of Deborah for "hindering the assimilation of the Israelite tribes to the civilization of Canaan." How can one approve or disapprove of history! One observes it and draws conclusions with which others are free to disagree. About Deborah, I simply stated a fact with which most historians agree, that some Israelitish tribes responded to Deborah's call and others did not—and that it was loyalty to a common divinity that unified the tribes that did respond.

As to my comments on Israel, which are few enough in a modern book about Judaism, Mr. Himmelfarb simply does violence to truth when he says that I claim "Israel has served no humanitarian purpose at all." There is not a line in the book that would support that contention. I did argue that the Zionist idea for a "Jewish state" was not *essential* to the solution of the refugee problem or the survival of Judaism. This was not an original thought with me. And it is something again about which Mr. Himmelfarb may disagree. But in order to disagree he does not have to set up his own straw man to have something to knock down.

4. Mr. Himmelfarb really goes too far by putting words in my mouth when he says there is no reason to suppose that I "would say an atheist cannot be a Jew."

5. Finally, of course, Mr. Himmelfarb leans comfortably back to pontificate that the growth of "either extreme"—of Jewish nationalism or universalism—would be damaging to Judaism,

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although it would probably not be fatal.

If I may be excused for saying so, I do not know what this sentence means. But I believe nothing would be as fatal to Judaism as Mr. Himmelfarb's "seamless web." For Mr. Himmelfarb nowhere gives the slightest indication of ever having seen any threads of variegated color, differing strengths, or uneven lengths. I do not know where he finds this kind of Judaism, either in history or today. But even if he does, to many Jews searching still for the ultimate truth and believing that Judaism is one of the noble ways in which to conduct the search, there is the challenge to weave into the tapestry a pattern conceived by human needs today, using those threads of the existing tapestry which are serviceable and—as countless Jews have done before—leaving those we have outgrown for the dispassionate, removed ambivalents like Mr. Himmelfarb.

ELMER BERGER
Executive Director
American Council for Judaism
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

1. As to my alleged failure to tell what Rabbi Berger's book was about, his own summary adds nothing of consequence to what was said in my review.

2. Is my meaning, when I say that Rabbi Berger would empty Judaism of any content at all, really such a mystery? I said that there is no content left in a Judaism that cannot be distinguished from Unitarianism or from humanist doctrines like Ethical Culture. Rabbi Berger has a good deal to say in his letter about such things as the language of prayer, which are completely beside the point. He is silent, however, about my assertion that the religion he advocates, which he persists in calling Judaism, is indistinguishable from the religion of a Christian denomination, and for that matter from doctrines entirely indifferent to any concern with God. I take issue with the name—Judaism—that he seeks to give to his ideas and with his attempt to ground them in Jewish tradition, whether it be ancient prophecy or modern Reform. It will not do for Rabbi Berger to talk of the Prophets' universalism and to obscure the fact that they simultaneously taught a particular relation between God and Israel. Similarly, Rabbi Berger is free to decide that Isaac Mayer Wise was mistaken, but Rabbi Berger must be challenged when he says, as he does in his book, that he stands for a return to the Reform of the Pittsburgh Platform. The Pittsburgh Platform expresses Wise's Judaism, not Rabbi Berger's. In answer to Rabbi Berger's incredulous question, Wise (a moderate Reformer), Einhorn and Kohler (radical Reformers), Shulman and Morgenstern, would all say yes, Judaism *is* superior.

Rabbi Berger gives a long list of pairs of controversialists in Jewish history. It would have been even longer if he had added Hillel and Shammai, Abaye and Raba, Saadia and Ben Meir, Eybeschuetz and Emden, Hasidim and Mitnagdim, Wise and Einhorn, and a host of others as well—longer, but equally irrelevant. Our teachers have always enjoyed controversy, believing that "every controversy for the sake of heaven will in the end be confirmed." I am sorry I cannot give Rabbi Berger a new interpretation of the conflict between prophet and priest. What I can give him is an interpretation that is not new, but that he does not seem to have heard of yet. Rabbi Berger's notion that the relation between Prophets and Priests was one of conflict only, the Prophets standing for ethics and universalism and the Priests for ritual and particularism, prevailed among scholars before the First World War; it no longer prevails among them and its survival as a tag of popular enlightenment is another instance of cultural lag. Modern scholarship has few reservations in denying an implacable conflict between Prophets and Priests. The disagreement was about emphasis, not about ethics *or* ritual, universalism *or* particularism.

My metaphor of a seamless web is clear enough: controversy has continued to be about emphasis, down to the present; there has been tension in the fabric, but it has not been torn apart. Who more than Einhorn and Kohler exalted ethics and universalism over ritual and particularism? But both Einhorn and Kohler believed in a Jewish community and in the synagogue as the bedrock institution of Judaism. It remained for Rabbi Berger to reject the idea of community and the "paraphernalia of the clerics and professionals"—which must mean the synagogue.

3. There are two references to assimilation in my review—hardly enough to corroborate the results of Rabbi Berger's venture in mind-reading. I should imagine that it is the business of a man concerned with morals and ethics to "approve or disapprove of history," but if Rabbi Berger says no, that is all right with me. Still, it is hard to reconcile his disclaimer with such a passage as his account of the origin of the autonomous medieval community—"those Jews who wanted power saw their golden opportunity to rise to power on the backs of other Jews." As for Deborah, Rabbi Berger did not confine himself to what most historians would say. Speaking of the Israelite tribes, he tells us that "some of them had achieved a considerable degree of assimilation" and that this being so, she had to count on "a lingering memory, which she hoped to find, of a desert god." His own

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feeling about it is clearly shown by the verb he chooses—they "had *achieved* . . . assimilation." We achieve success, victory, and good things, not failure, defeat, or bad things. For Rabbi Berger, Deborah was a trouble-making nationalist like the later Ezra and Nehemiah, whom he reproves for wanting "to offset the integration [!] that had taken place in Babylon and in Palestine [!] during the years of captivity."

The jacket of Rabbi Berger's book describes it as "The Jewish Case Against Zionism." In the text he declares that the State of Israel "was not necessary to the solution of the refugee problem." In the light of his own stress on the word *"essential"* in his letter, I think it clear that I rendered his views accurately in my review. Much could be said about refugees, but it is enough to recall that while some 150,000 non-Jewish displaced persons remain in Europe —which is an abomination and a reproach— practically no Jewish displaced persons remain. The State of Israel made the difference, and one need not be a Zionist to recognize this fact.

4. In writing that "there is no reason to suppose that Rabbi Berger would say an atheist cannot be a Jew," I made it clear that I was drawing a logical inference, not quoting. Rabbi Berger makes a great show of indignation, but he does not deny the validity of the inference.

5. The extremes that Judaism must reprehend are a desire for Jews without religion and a desire for religion without Jews. The nationalists advocate one extreme. Rabbi Berger is a spokesman for the other, in a particularly extreme form—a "Judaism" without tradition, without a Jewish community, without the synagogue, and quite possibly without God either. For Rabbi Berger, these are outworn threads that he would discard from the tapestry of Judaism, but they are really the warp and woof, and when they are discarded there is no tapestry left. If Rabbi Berger still does not understand, I would remind him of two remarkable men who were contemporaries, Isaac M. Wise and Felix Adler. Wise's Judaism is part of the seamless web I was talking about, and Adler's Ethical Culture is not.

MILTON HIMMELFARB

New York City

Two Corrections

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In my article "In the Backwash of the Great Crime" (February 1952), the editorial condensation of one passage resulted in the statement that "the stereotype of the Jew as a parasitic 'enemy of society' has always been a special obsession of the Germans." In fact, I think there is no such thing as an obsession of *"the* Germans," who comprise sixty million individuals, with no more of a collective personality than any other people. Indeed, such generalizations about a people as a whole are sloppy, often malicious, and always objectionable. In this particular case, the incessant complaints of the Nazis to the effect that the majority of Germans did not adequately "appreciate" their anti-Semitic propaganda makes the generalization especially absurd.

NORBERT MUHLEN

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have read with considerable interest and some surprise the article by Hans Meyerhoff entitled "Death of a Genius" in the January issue of COMMENTARY. Mr. Meyerhoff writes with commendable skill, and I do not for a moment question either his good faith or yours. As administrator of the estate of Thomas Wolfe, however, I can't help wondering about two things:

1. On Page 46 Mr. Meyerhoff quotes from the last letter Wolfe wrote to the late Maxwell E. Perkins. None of Thomas Wolfe's writings, including this letter, is in the public domain and the proprieties governing such matters required that either Mr. Meyerhoff or you ask permission to make this quotation. Had such a request come to me I would have granted it, but I confess I feel rather annoyed about the matter since the proprieties were not observed.

2. Why, oh why, if you were going to publish an article dealing with factual material, did you not take the elementary precaution of having it checked for accuracy by someone in a position to know what the facts are? Meyerhoff's article contains a number of inaccuracies which could have been easily corrected. I do not have either the time or the inclination at this point to write a long letter enumerating these inaccuracies and correcting them. All I shall say is that I would have been glad to read the article and to suggest the necessary corrections in advance of publication. It seems a pity that you did not bother to submit the article to me at that time, for in a good many instances the truth which Mr. Meyerhoff missed is more interesting than the account he has given.

Since I have great respect for COMMENTARY and the integrity of its purpose, I confess that I am somewhat shocked by these breaches of good journalistic practice.

EDWARD C. ASWELL

New York City

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

The Pure Functionary

HITLER'S INTERPRETER: THE SECRET HISTORY OF GERMAN DIPLOMACY. By PAUL SCHMIDT. Macmillan. 286 pp. $4.00.

Reviewed by FRANCIS GOLFFING

IF IN this book Dr. Schmidt—German Foreign Office translator and interpreter from 1923 until 1945—fails to define himself as the perfect paradigm of the time-server, it is for one reason only: there are elements of the flunky in his make-up and attitudes which run counter to our rather tough, masculine notion of opportunism. In most countries—and this means America as well as Spain, Italy as well as England—the toady and the trimmer are conceived as distinct types, depending on one another for survival but still distinct. Not so in Germany, whose peculiar political history seems to have bred a type combining the features of both: at once pliant and hard-boiled, self-effacing and self-aggrandizing, loyal to his pocket and to some dubious ultimate end. He knows how to profit from circumstances but is content with his own role of minor circumstance in the historical process; and he takes a certain pride in this limitation, which he conceives as preordained. Unlike the "rank" opportunist, with his active virtues and vices, his clearly defined ends, he sensitively shrinks and accedes; and unlike the full-blown sycophant, he justifies his conduct to himself by playing up that special *talent* of his which makes it quite natural for him to act as he does.

Dr. Schmidt's great gift is for languages: he has an expert knowledge of several, together with an amazing memory which allows him to render whole speeches, dialogues, quarrels *verbatim*. One is duly impressed. But the trouble with operational talents is that they inspire in the owner an extravagant self-esteem, as though this sort of gift implied a great knowledge of men and affairs; and, more dangerously, that they make for an outlook which is either simply value-blind or cynical, and in both cases amoral. Worst of all, the relative scarcity in our culture of brilliant and versatile "operators" causes people to respond to them quite inordinately: the polyglot is seen as the wizard, the wizard as genius; and genius, no matter what its record, must not be touched—especially genius as useful as this.

DR. SCHMIDT acting as interpreter during the Nuremberg trials is not a pleasant sight to behold; not because he has not dissociated himself sufficiently from his old cronies but because he dissociates himself so blandly. The pure functionary (in every sense), by turns witness for the defense and for the prosecution, he complacently watches the last act of a play in which his own role has been far from glorious. "I was staying in a wing about fifty yards from the gymnasium where, the last few nights, I had heard the dull blows as the gallows were erected. I interpreted for the American psychiatrists, accompanying them on their visits in the Nuremberg prison, and witnessed human dramas of deep tragedy." The calm matter-of-factness, perfunctoriness almost, of that last phrase throws a more lurid light on certain German character traits than do the combined ravings of Goebbels and Streicher.

An unpleasant book, this, and one that engrosses. For riddled as it is with clichés, its author can claim the advantage, literally, of a new point of view; he has seen things nobody else has: not because his eyes are unusually penetrating (like his mind they play on surfaces only), but because they have the neutrality, the indiscriminate appetite of a camera lens; and this camera happens to have been placed throughout in positions not only favorable but unique. Dr. Schmidt's complete lack of moral or emotional involvement, coupled with his unflagging zest for particulars, has a somewhat paradoxical effect: in his account, the most formal state occasion assumes an air of piquancy, of backstairs gossip. The extreme of objectivity promotes its opposite: a succession of colored slides where everything stands

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out in sharp relief, with no principle of subordination or pattern.

THE series of diplomatic tableaux starts with the Eden-Simon visit to Berlin in 1935—the earlier portions of the book have been omitted in the English version—and ends shortly before the final defeat of the German armies. A rather more personal "Epilogue," in which much is hinted and little said, concludes the book. One is engrossed; but also bored, especially through the first half. The trivial method strains against the magnetism of the subject: these constant comings and goings, the banquets, the sessions, the *quid pro quo*'s, contretemps, and so on. An occasional crumb thrown to the mind would have helped, but there is no mind to throw it. There even isn't much in the way of factual information that one hasn't read elsewhere. There is nothing, really, except the special angle of vision.

Dr. Schmidt might have played that advantage for what it is worth; and perhaps he did so in the omitted portions—those dealing with Stresemann and Bruening. If in no other respect, the present version disappoints in this one: here is a man, we feel, who enjoyed a privileged, in some ways unique, position "at court"; whose chance of surveying the scene was excellent precisely because he was placed at the periphery; yet whose function, far from peripheral, was essential to the workings of the diplomatic machinery and so to the fortunes of the Reich. It is true that he was not admitted into the intimacy of Hitler and his henchmen, nor would the foreign diplomats he met be likely to treat him as their confidant. All the same, his prestige and his peculiar role as "operational" mediator made it quite natural that he should receive much casual, off-guard talk; this "super on the diplomatic stage," as he modestly calls himself, enjoyed the limited confidence of both sides and his notes show that he was thoroughly alive to the prerogative. But how very little he makes of it all!

He actually records a great many asides addressed to him in the course of the various negotiations, some amusing, others quite revealing—yet always in a corroborative way, confirming what we already knew, adding a touch of color to a familiar outline; never of a kind to stimulate our imagination or make us revise our earlier judgment of men or affairs. This, of course, cannot all be charged to Dr. Schmidt's insensitiveness; but one has the inescapable feeling that there must have been much that he personally missed.

BUT it is Hitler who interests us here, rather than his interpreter. Of Schmidt's portraits of the "Fuehrer" the same may be said as of all his portraits: judged by other available evidence, they are accurate enough, and the special angle of vision, the impassiveness of the camera eye, contributes an occasional authenticating touch where authentication was needed. There is the matter of the "Fuehrer's" intelligence and mannerliness in discourse—a moot point for many years and one which Schmidt was in a particularly good position to determine. His testimony bears out what more serious observers have stated. The occasion is the Eden-Simon visit to Berlin in 1935: "That morning, and during all these conversations with the Englishmen, he [Hitler] impressed me as a man who advanced his arguments intelligently and skilfully, observing all the conventions for such political discussions, as though he had done nothing else for years. The only unusual thing about him was the length at which he spoke. . . . His phraseology was perfectly conventional. He expressed himself clearly and adroitly, was clearly sure of his arguments, was easily understood, and not difficult to translate into English. He appeared to have everything he wanted to say very clear in his own mind. On the table before him lay a fresh writing block, which remained unused throughout the negotiations. He had no notes with him."

To balance this picture we are told about the well-known uncontrollable rages—sudden squalls between two periods of calm: "At the mention of Lithuania, Hitler for the first time showed anger. 'We will have nothing whatever to do with Lithuania,' he exclaimed with flashing eyes, suddenly seeming to be a different person. I was often to see such unexpected outbursts in the future. Almost without transition, he would suddenly fly into a rage: his voice would become hoarse, he would roll his r's and clench his fists, while his eyes blazed. . . . Then the storm subsided as suddenly as it had begun, and Hitler was again the quiet, polished negotiator. . . ." Perhaps the most striking passage of this sort is the one describing Hitler's uncanny composure after the Stauffenberg assassination attempt in July 1944, and his subsequent meeting with Mussolini.

Dr. Schmidt has some good things to say

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on the ways in which different foreign diplomats reacted to Hitler; Hitler's own reactions, it seems, were not within his interpreter's purview or else he did not think them sufficiently interesting to record. Again, there are colorful touches but nothing essentially new. He speaks of Lloyd George's enthusiasm, Simon's fatherly concern, Eden's sharp but not altogether unsympathetic scrutiny. The passage on Simon is easily the best: "His face naturally expressed a certain paternal benevolence. I had noticed it in Geneva when I heard him stating his country's views in his well-modulated voice with all the clarity of an English jurist though perhaps with too much emphasis on the purely formal aspects. Watching him now, as he listened attentively to Hitler, I had the feeling that his expression of paternal understanding was deepening. Perhaps he was pleasantly surprised to find, instead of the wild Nazi of British propaganda, a man who was emotional and emphatic, but not unreasonable or ill-natured. In later years, when foreign visitors spoke to me almost with enthusiasm of the impression Hitler made on them, I often suspected that this effect was produced by a reaction against the somewhat crude anti-Hitler propaganda." This is as shrewd, as adventurous in personal speculation as Dr. Schmidt ever gets in this book; and the instances of such understanding are rare.

From This He Makes a Living?

BELLA, BELLA KISSED A FELLA. By ARTHUR KOBER. Random House. 206 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by ISAAC ROSENFELD

THE stereotypes of Jews which I dislike the most are the ones that Jews themselves develop; and of these, I have a special distaste for Arthur Kober's. But it's hard to say why. On the whole it's a rather pleasant, dreamy, and remote little mishmash that he concocts, almost idyllic in tone; it appears so, at any rate, when you consider how successfully his Jews have been spared their own history. The time—though Kober goes to some trouble to establish it as "now"—is somewhere between the onset of immigration and 1933. The Jews have settled in the Bronx, and the girls have gone to work in offices: nothing else has happened. Bella, her friends, and her family go about making bilingual puns, saying, for example, *Erev* Flynn for Errol Flynn, *mitt* for meat, *udder* for or, etc. Most of the discussions conducted in this vocabulary bear on Bella's love life, which is to say her efforts to trap a husband. A subsidiary theme, given to Ma and Pa Gross, is the standard American joke that the women wear the pants, spattered with their husbands' brains, in the American family. Every now and then Kober lays aside the dialect to say something on his own, in pure Castilian: "Her mind was a seething cauldron, stirred by the spoon of self-pity."

THE trouble with all this, as with every accurate heartless distortion, is that the closer it gets to reproducing accent and circumstance, the more it tells a lie. Humor may be wildly exaggerated, crude, mad—but so long as it preserves the style of its subject matter it is true. Mark Twain's take-off on the Mississippi boatman is a prodigious whopper, but its fidelity to the style of life makes it dead right. Sholom Aleichem, Gogol, Dickens, Cervantes, Swift—name any humorist, satirist, caricaturist that you please, the same holds for them all. It is precisely here, in this fundamental respect, that Kober goes wrong. What he has to say of the Jewish style of life is a complete perversion of it. He makes Jewish life seem like a perpetual Hoff cartoon.

Take Ma and Pa Gross. It is impossible not to think of them in the image of the bosomy and abdominal cetaceans, in housecoat and undershirt, with frying pan and newspaper, that Hoff draws. The fact that the publishers of Kober's stories have encouraged this identification, using Hoff in their advertisements or juxtaposing them in magazines, is merely an external circumstance; the resemblance between the two is by natural affinity. Or Bella Gross. Whomever Kober may have had in mind in his conception of her, she has emerged as the equivalent in words of the smooth-faced, ball-breasted chick of the cartoons who sits with her fella in the parlor.

The limitations of the two styles are identical. Bella Gross has no more of an inner life than the girl of the cartoons, and this in spite of the greater resources that words presumably put in the service of characterization. The reason is obvious: Kober and his readers would be embarrassed by the revelation, it would destroy the smug, smooth rule of false abstraction, in terms of which Bella and her contemporaries

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A SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF THE JEWS

by

SALO WITTMAYER BARON

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can be moved about as in a game. The moment you stop playing this game, the moment you suspend the rule that nothing shall be represented that cannot be shown on Hoff's drawing board, it ceases to be funny and appears as the heartsick, weary, and shameful thing it really is.

Consider Bella's secret life. She has been around, it seems to me, for at least fifteen years. Assuming that her current activities began in earnest when she was about twenty, she must now be a girl of not less than thirty-five, still unmarried, still untouched by human hand. Kober assures us that she would never allow a fella to get fresh with her. If this is the case, then Bella is hopelessly hung up, hoist by her own petard, the victim of a strategy of which the worst feature is that it cannot be revised. Bella's was a campaign of strategic retreat designed to stave off frontal assault by falling back to the prepared defenses of parlor, kitchen, and dining room. The suitor is drawn in deeper and deeper, while his exit is cut off by Ma and Pa with food and comradely talk. This works only to a point. The crisis comes when the fella, by virtue of prolonged infiltration, accepts the substitution of food for sex. This is dangerous, one must act quickly. From now on the fella, on the verge of losing his "freshness," is capable of fueling his campaign not on the resources of his own libido, but on the enemy's larder. The only hope is to let him approach his real objective just as he is on the point of forgetting what it is. This will upset him completely; it will give him indigestion. While he suffers anxiety, the beleaguered force need only undertake a short advance, confront the siege force, and the battle's won. Otherwise the food will grow stale, the *borsht* will lose its blood-red color, the *latkes* molder in the pan.

Now since we know that Bella did not stoop to conquer, we may assert that her position is desperate. At thirty-five, faced with a future in which she shall do nothing better than provide free loading for the Maxies and Mordies, the accountants and salesmen who come her way, she has certainly devoted a thought to Freud, and words like *repression* and *neurotic*, Kober to the contrary, have appeared in her speech. She may even be undergoing psychoanalytic treatment on the sly; it's a sure thing that she attends public lectures on the subject (with the ultimate desperation of dragging her boy friend along). She has by now rebelled against the tactics which she cannot help practicing, she regards herself a liberated woman, and this conviction of her own daring makes her arguments with her mother vicious to hear. It's a sad case, and it's implied in every word of Kober's stories. Not only is there nothing funny in this situation, it's impossible to go on pretending that it doesn't exist, and that Bella, who is caught in it, doesn't suffer extremely.

As a matter of mere statistics, Kober may be right. There may well be such Bellas, they may even be in the majority (which I doubt, but that's beside the point), and he may have described their lives and characters as neatly as their accents. But existence is not the issue. What's involved here is our casually treating this condition as just another joke, and the assent our laughter gives to Kober's main assumption—that Jewish life is relentlessly bourgeois and calculated, fundamentally a matter of buying and selling, a transaction in goods throughout, and that Jewish girls are irrevocably trammeled and conventional, incapable of surrender in love.

If this is true (which it's not), if Bella's

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character, as Kober presents it, is really Jewish destiny, then it's no joke. If this is not true, then it's an insult and a lie. In either case there's nothing to laugh at.

Economics and War

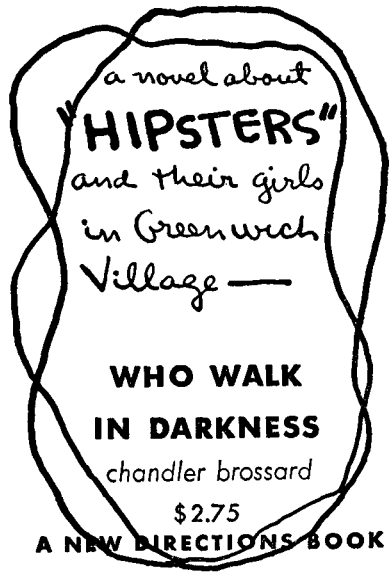
CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM ON TRIAL. By FRITZ STERNBERG. John Day. 576 pp. $6.50.

Reviewed by GEORGE LICHTHEIM

ARE the major wars of this century due to rivalry between expanding imperialist powers? And if so, is imperialist expansion inherent in the capitalist system as Marx described it? Neither thesis finds much support in Marx's own writings, but both have been developed by Marxist authors with some help from liberals, such as J. A. Hobson—and by now have taken their place among the commonplaces of socialist literature.

In Europe, the rise of interest in this subject dates from the First World War and the years immediately preceding it. Hilferding, Rosa Luxemburg, Bukharin, and Lenin (the latter making no original contribution but relying heavily on Hobson) all tried to show that imperialism is linked to modern capitalism by an economic mechanism essential to the unimpeded working of the system. Rosa Luxemburg even attempted to supply mathematical proof of this contention: a hazardous undertaking which earned her some posthumous reproaches from Bukharin and which also helped to start off an interminable and largely fruitless theoretical wrangle among the German and Austrian Marxists of the pre-Hitler period. An echo of this controversy seems now to have crossed the Atlantic, with the customary time lag, reinforced in this instance by the fact that nearly all the participants to the original dispute have long been in their graves.

IN THE work under review, Dr. Sternberg has provided a sort of Plain Man's Guide to this fascinating topic. Although himself reared on a strict diet of Luxemburgian logic, he eschews mathematical proof and adopts the simple and direct approach of the instructor expounding elementary verities to a class of not excessively bright pupils. He has refurbished and brought up to date his earlier writings, some of them not previously translated from the German, and



in this manner produced what may fairly be called an introductory textbook of Marxist (but not Communist) economic history, with special reference to the causation of war and the growth of inter-imperialist rivalry. His standpoint is that of a left-wing socialist who hopes for the emergence of a United Socialist Europe as a middle ground between the Soviet Union and the United States, and he writes with a compelling candor which goes some way to offset the general flatness and occasional slipshodness of his style. Although still in some sense a Leninist, he recognizes that the present Soviet regime is neither socialist nor capitalist, but represents a novel form of state-controlled economy under which the workers have lost their rights to the ruling bureaucracy; he also concedes that the regime is steadily becoming more totalitarian, and consequently more obnoxious to democratic socialists. On the other hand, he holds that the Kremlin is under no *economic* compulsion to go to war, and from this fact he draws a modest degree of reassurance.

It might be questioned whether an economic compulsion to make war has ever existed under any circumstances; but since Dr. Sternberg assumes that there is, or was, such a mechanism, he cannot be blamed for devoting much thought to its political consequences. But he is in the curious position of having to admit that the present world conflict is not due to economic rivalry but to political antagonisms for which there seem to be no obvious economic correlates. For the Soviet regime can still expand at home, and although he is skeptical about the

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stability of a United States economy stimulated by a giant arms program, he concedes the existence of an alternative—a welfare economy—which need only be adopted to remove the danger of permanent overproduction. He also makes the reasonable point that the only substantial export of American capital likely to take place in future will be state-directed and subservient to political purposes. In short, on his own showing, the connection between economic expansion and war in the present epoch is so tenuous as hardly to exist at all.

MUCH of what Dr. Sternberg has to say on these and related topics belongs to the common staple of socialist and New Deal literature, while his abbreviated sketch of 20th-century history may fairly be described as journalism of a not particularly high order. There are times when one wonders for whom this stout volume is intended: much of the information it contains can be culled from any textbook. Was it really necessary to relate once again the story of Hitler's rise and fall? However, there is a theme: the decline of world capitalism consequent upon the gradual contraction of the primitive agrarian hinterland into which the youthful capitalist economy of Britain and Europe expanded during the 19th century. Insistence upon this single, all-embracing explanation not only stamps Sternberg as an orthodox Marxist of the school of Rosa Luxemburg; it also serves to link his economic argument to his ponderous historical generalizations. For if capitalism needs an agrarian hinterland for its functioning, then it becomes clear why imperialist rivalries center upon the control of backward territories, and also why such rivalries are incurable by ordinary means. This, for Sternberg, is the crux of the whole story, and it follows that in discussing the two major wars of this century he is able without flinching to adopt the familiar German view that Germany had to make war in order to acquire an empire, either overseas or in southeast Europe. Which, of course, lets in the subject of British colonialism, and of colonies in general.

It might seem surprising that a socialist like Sternberg should on this issue side with the propagandists of the *Flottenverein* and the *Kolonialverein,* but an obsessive misunderstanding of the Anglo-German antagonism is endemic in Germany (and in Russia—Lenin was as convinced as any good Russian nationalist that the British owed their supremacy to the exploitation of India). For Sternberg it is a simple matter of history that Germany—the Germany of 1914, which was fast outstripping Britain on the world market—had to make war in order to acquire a colonial empire. He takes it for granted that this was a rational aim, although he has to admit that Germany was doing extremely well without having any colonies to speak of. The fact is that colonies are to him what fortifications were to Tristam Shandy's Uncle Toby; they are his Open Sesame. In the service of his obsession he unhesitatingly ignores the evidence where it fails to support his preconception. He quotes Marx's warning to the Germans in 1870 that the projected annexation of Alsace-Lorraine would perpetuate French hostility and render another war certain, but when he comes to the pre-1914 period he will have it that it was Franco-German rivalry in Morocco (then a mere wilderness) which sparked their antagonism. And similarly for the mounting tension between Germany and Britain, though the record shows that the British were willing, in 1912-14, to let Germany have the Portuguese colonies in Africa and a good deal besides.

THE fact is that Sternberg is no historian, and only very dubiously a Marxist; for Marx was concerned with just the kind of historical irrationality which Sternberg, with all the confident dogmatism of a chamber of commerce president, is trying to rule out of order. German policy before and during the two wars was irrational, and the same was true of Japanese policy from 1931 onwards. To acknowledge this is not to overlook the existence of tendencies making for imperialism, but to question their relevance to the total situation. For ex-

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ample, an analysis of European history since about 1900 ought to start from the fact that Europe was articulated into a system of national states whose competing ambitions no longer made sense in terms of the emerging world society which capitalism was about to establish at the technological and economic level. Their historic rivalries produced two wars which have led to the partial destruction, not of capitalism, but of Europe. The causation in each case was irrational so far as Germany (the active agent of destruction) was concerned, in that the rulers of Germany twice opted for solutions which made no sense at all and led to national catastrophe. Colonies were unimportant to Germany in 1914, and had no significance whatever for her problems in 1933. And Japan already had all the colonies she needed.

It would thus seem that, in both cases, war was begun for no rational aim (in economic terms) whatever, but rather in response to internal pressures—partly economic, but mainly political and social—diagnosed by Marxist and non-Marxist observers long before "monopoly capitalism" developed. Even at the purely economic level, German agrarian protectionism—as shown in Gerschenkron's classic study *Bread and Democracy in Germany* (1943)—was a far more important factor making for an aggressive foreign policy than any hankering after colonies, since it demonstrably affected the most powerful groups in society both before 1914 and after.

All this, however, is merely to say that the subject needs to be dealt with by a historian, and not by writers like Sternberg who suppose that politics have to be discussed in terms of what they are *not* about.

The Irishman and the Jew

THE MAGIC PEOPLE. By ARLAND USSHER. Devin-Adair. 177 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by MARK RAVEN

THERE are thousands of ways of writing a book about the Jews, and most of them have already been tried. It is sad that the best-intentioned and most reliable historically are often the dullest. Perhaps one should not grumble too much then if a new and very original one—well intentioned, too—falls back at times on some rather threadbare generalizations. At least the book is lively and interesting from start to finish.

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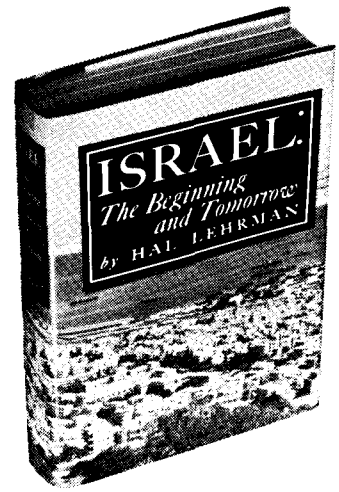

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Mr. Ussher's book amounts to an intensely witty, erudite, discursive conversation about Jewish history, and anyone who enjoys good conversation will feel reluctant to criticize it. No good conversationalist can easily be challenged while in full spate. The flow of ideas is too entertaining to be tested by humdrum measures: the analogies, the hypotheses are too delightfully preposterous to lie open to refutation. If one challenges the book at all it would have to be at the same level of uninhibited speculation—if one could achieve it.

But it is not easy to match blarney with an Irishman. Arland Ussher is an Irish philosopher, a Christian, who worked over his own countrymen first in a "provocative" and widely read book entitled *The Face and Mind of Ireland* before turning to an apparently different subject, the Jews. But it is soon clear that, interesting as the Jews are to him in their own right, his real subject is still, and rightly, his own people. The question he really asks is not "What are the Jews?" but rather "What are we Christians in relation to the Jews?" Spelling this out, Ussher is saying: "The Jews aren't something extraneous to the Christian world. I challenge any thinking Christian to define his personal position without exploring and committing himself deeply on the Jewish question."

FROM the beginning of the strange story in the archaic Biblical world (about which he is very entertaining) until the grimmer, but still amazing events of today, Ussher finds the Jews a "magic people," not so much because of the miracles within their own history but because of their deeper role as unconscious catalysts in the whole Christian process. The Jews, it seems, stumbled into something magic almost by accident and throughout have been unable to understand fully its significance. As we all know (or as Mr. Ussher knows) the Jews, with all their merits, are an "earthy" people, and the fundamental nature of human existence can be felt only in mystical assumptions beyond their power. The Christians have got the idea, but they in turn have been too human, in the earthy sense, to live by it. Resisting the ideal, they have hated the Jews because the latter were the permanent symbol of their failure. Mr. Ussher asserts that he developed this theory before reading Freud on the Jews, and it was of course his sense of absolute horror at what has happened to the Jews at the hands of Christian civilization that led him to produce a theory shocking enough to account for it. The Jews who produced the Messiah—and all the wonder involved—rejected him and have suffered ever since. But, says Mr. Ussher, "... it may be it was the Gentiles that suffered the deeper scar for they have been split in their souls, nourishing a hidden hateful secret in their subconsciousness. Seeing and loving what they understood but little, they have resented deeply the duty of love, the burden of the ideal. So they have rationalized that discordancy as love of the Lord Jesus Christ, and hatred of the nation which delivered him to death. They hate it, in fact, for having given him birth."

Only a Christian can say from the inside if this analysis makes any sense. Some of its embellishments have a nice wryness about them, if one does not look too close. The Jews rejected Jesus because he was too much one of them. "To appreciate greatness demands a certain *recul*." They saw only the familiar side of him, and preferred to avoid the other-worldliness: "The Jew . . . is not without his share of the very human and naive duplicity of soul which wants the Kingdom of Heaven, *but not yet*." Once the tragedy of crucifixion was over, the roles were reversed. "Israel bequeathed to us (and to Islam) her intolerance; but—as if by a sort of exchange—she herself developed, and bettered, the so-called Christian mildness." It needed a Jew—Freud—"to hold up the mirror to the Western psyche" so that the real motives in this crisscross of guilt could begin to be unraveled.

TO PROVE the universality of his thesis, Mr. Ussher finds in our latest discontents only a variation on an old theme. The Jew, having turned up a Messiah, then proceeded, in the machine age, to produce an equally disturbing

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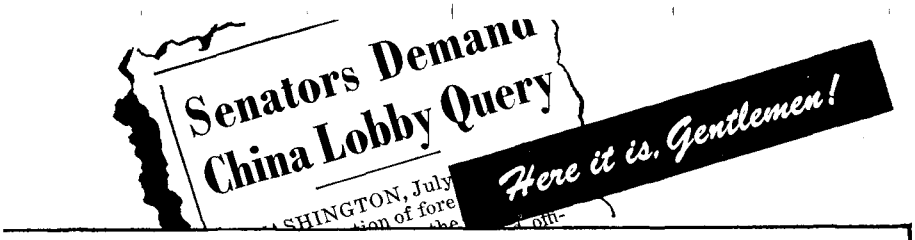

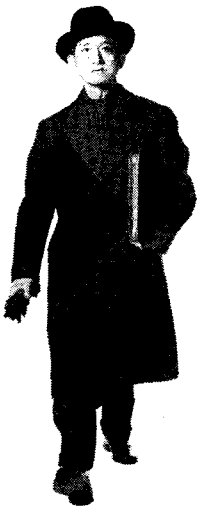

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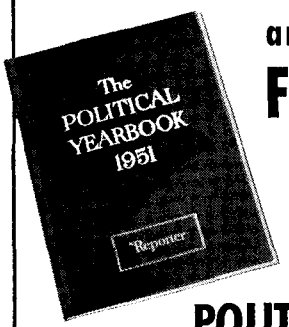

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notion, "the greatest Myth of all history—Progress." The Jews had emerged from the Middle Ages into a world in which "their particular aptitudes" were to take them to the top. "Who but the Magic People should rise to the magical possibilities that seemed then to open?" Industrialization, world finance—all could lead to a Millennium. "At first they expected it through laissez-faire capitalism, a little later through collectivism." Once again they had put forward something the Christians were bound to dislike even when they found it irresistible. "The Western Christian—generally speaking—has never believed in, or really desired the Earthly Paradise." Once again, the Jews attracted to themselves all the rejection that the Christians really felt for the historical process. "They were sick of the Machine, sick of Money idealism, sick of millennial dreams, sick above all of the clever conjurer who seemed to typify these things." Out of all this, intensified to the *n*th degree, Adolf Hitler came to power.

At this point one begins to ask whether it is really safe to let an author get away with the facile generalities of conversation, however charming the brogue. The whole breathless argument stands or falls on the validity of this strange central figure "the Jew"—not *"the Jews"* as they have been and are in all their infinite variety, but *"the Jew,"* a conveniently single projection, a paradox in some ways perhaps, but fundamentally, for the sake of the argument, a single idea, a butt, a peg, a self-propagating Myth that readers are expected to take on trust because it is so familiar. Unquestionably, everything that Mr. Ussher says about "the Jew" has a kind of truth in the sense that this is Mr. Ussher's mental picture. In this sense, also, the projection is vastly interesting. The only trouble is that this is not in any objective sense a picture of the Jews who live and work and think in the world around us. They are far too varied, having lived through so many centuries and in countless countries and at countless social and economic levels, to fit into simple generalizations, whether flattering or derogatory.

It is almost enough to quote some of Mr. Ussher's judgments:

"The Jew is younger than we in mind, but far older in soul."

"The Jew is materially-minded, even when he is mystical."

"The mind of the Jew—always mundane, however much inclined to chimeras—has something mechanical, and, as it were, metallic, in it. And yet Jews, though somewhat mechanically-minded in their thought processes, are seldom mechanically-minded. They do not as a rule enjoy 'tinkering with machinery' as much as we do."

"The Jew is a gambler—but not, like the gentleman-gambler, a player with life; a bit of a magician—but not, like the Christian 'bohemian,' a mere artist in life. He is always serious. . . . His sense of humor . . . is sardonic or masochistic—it cannot be blithe."

If, as one knows, these and similar judgments are just not true in any universal sense, one begins to wonder what validity the idea of "the Jew" has at all. Certainly there is a Jewish theology discoverable in Jewish religious writings. Certainly also there is a Jewish image in the mind of non-Jews (as there is, in the minds of other nationals, an image of the Englishman or the American). But why should one, except for the fun of conversation, pretend that this social image has validity, or try, as Mr. Ussher does to some extent, to link it to the religious ideas of the tradition, a world of ideas very far removed from most of those who have inherited it? The Jews in the world around us are, in the most important sense, human beings adjusting themselves from birth to death to their environment. In America they often like tinkering with machinery.

One would not press this on Mr. Ussher, who knows these arguments very well, if he did not seem sometimes to forget his own warnings on the subject. One suspects also that unless one's horror at what has happened to the

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Jews is part of a general horror at any cruelty to anybody, one may be led into some shaky positions. One should not be kind to Jews because they are the "magic people."

Mr. Ussher knows this too, but he forgets it. At one point he sees mutual tolerance arising from a kind of compromise: the Jews should "learn to accept the greatest of their sons" and the Christians should "consent to honor the race which produced the greatest child of man." In many ways this oft-repeated sentiment seems very good-natured, yet in one sense, if one explores it, it sounds like the Korean truce talks. A permanent understanding depends on something deeper—and simpler. Both Jews and Christians are human beings.

Mr. Ussher is more stimulating when he is not afraid to be firm about his own approach. On the birth of Jesus he says: "But now the strangest thing happened. Amongst this race, blessed or cursed with exceptional awareness of good and evil . . . God himself consented to be born."

Each man's personal vision can be as unequivocal as this. True tolerance comes not from intellectual or sentimental compromise, but from an overriding humanism.

A Rediscovery of America

CHOSEN COUNTRY. By JOHN DOS PASSOS. Houghton Mifflin. 485 pp. $4.00.

Reviewed by NATHAN GLICK

MODESTY is a vanishing quality in serious American fiction, and part of the pleasure one takes in John Dos Passos' new book comes from the novelty of its sober, almost old-fashioned craft. Nothing in the book is clearer than Dos Passos' determination to say no more than the experience he is describing warrants. Even the unsympathetic characters, except for Communist fellow-travelers, are handled with a certain humor and detachment that makes them closer to Sinclair Lewis's essentially harmless philistines than to Dos Passos' own earlier dyed-in-history villains. But the chronic pressure of ideology on incident, unavoidable in a writer who is both politically responsive and in the process of revising his views, plays havoc with the novel's language and structure.

Dos Passos has never been attracted to the strict logic of plot, but *Chosen Country* surpasses even his earlier work in looseness of organization. The plot concerns Jay Pignatelli, who develops after his World War I experience into a lawyer with vaguely radical leanings, and the independent and sensible Lulie Harrington, briefly employed at writing advertising copy in Chicago. Although there is a casual early encounter, it is only in the last pages of the book that the two really meet and fall in love; the rest of the novel is divided into precise, internalized evocations of a few significant episodes of their separate lives, and eclectic biographies of their forebears and of some odd figures representing typical intellectual currents. The panoramic biographies seem flaccid and monotonous in comparison with those of *USA*. What virtues of moderation and affection *Chosen Country* possesses are almost entirely contained in the nostalgic but scrupulous passages celebrating, in the personalities of the heroine and hero, American innocence and idealism.

For over a decade, Dos Passos has been working toward a statement of faith, in his fiction, comparable to the invocation of America's libertarian tradition in *The Ground We Stand On*. But invariably, and reluctantly, he has stopped short at tired thrusts at the enemy: Stalinist treachery in *Adventures of a Young Man*,

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home-grown fascist demagogy in *Number One,* New Deal gigantism in *The Grand Design.* Always suspicious of pious and patriotic language, he has found it easier to protest than to praise. Even the affirming hero of *Chosen Country* gropes for "words that weren't flannel in the mouth."

THIS attempt, finally, to represent life in the United States as admirable, as something a man of good will and good sense might deliberately choose, reveals a radical change in the temper of Dos Passos' writing. Certainly the most unexpected thing in *Chosen Country* is the ebullient portrait of young Lulie Harrington, the only likable female character Dos Passos has drawn and the symbol, in the book's argument, of such American virtues as gaiety, tomboy hardiness, domestic efficiency, and instinctive, non-intellectual sensibility. She enters and leaves the book against a background of woods and fresh air, a spiritual descendant of the pioneer woman, eager to explore some modest wilderness on a fishing trip or a honeymoon. The fact that she is presented without the tarnishing touch of an idea is part of Dos Passos' return to first principles, in this case, the principle that woman's true gift resides in instinct, not thought. The women in *Chosen Country* who espouse ideas are either fanatics or ninnies; those who do not are at worst nagging invalids and at best angels of good intention, not unlike the maternal characters in Hollywood's small-town movies or the cheerful suburban wives of the Alka-Seltzer ads.

IT IS not accidental that Lulie Harrington is discovered reading only one book, Malory's *Morte d'Arthur,* the English text that most fully incorporates the code of knightly ethics. Jay Pignatelli is equally a Malory fan, but he has advanced beyond King Arthur's Table Round to Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* and bears the weight of Dos Passos' feeling that men must deal with events and ideas, in historical perspective. One suspects that behind his newly espoused classical detachment Dos Passos is plagued by an old distaste for American life in its concrete contemporary manifestations. When the hero tries to formulate his reasons for adopting America as the country of his adult allegiance, he is embarrassed by his own words. This is more than a problem of phrasing; it implies a confusion of belief, a refusal or inability to define what it is in American life that attracts him and what repels him. Historical analogy offers Dos Passos and his hero, in their ideological predicament, the unearned consolations of philosophy. In the romantic climax of the novel, as Jay drives east with Lulie through "the raw magnificent country," he finds himself not minding the ugliness of billboards and ruined barns. "This was the time of claptrap and waste when the frontier adventures had ended and the real civilization hadnt been invented yet. Even the Parthenon must have looked silly under the scaffolding and the builders' litter." (It is appropriate that the creator of *USA,* the most formidable technological structure in American fiction, should draw his central metaphor from architecture, placing it second only to history as a token of traditional virtues. Jay is stamped a civilized man by his knowledge of classical buildings; and Lulie's older brother is redeemed from the trivia of domestic quarrels and newspaper gossip by his purifying technical passion for architecture.)

IF Dos Passos' historical optimism is remarkably facile and arbitrary, his refusal to give decent credit to America's actual accomplishments explains why this is so. He is so sanguine about the future—"We've just scratched the surface of our country, it's still undiscovered"—precisely because he is so disappointed with the past. What continually rescues his writing is a narrative sense that is much surer than his philosophical talent. His treatment here of a young man's experience in France during and after the First World War is more thoroughly human and just than anything of its kind he has done before. For the first time, he acknowl-

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"Our chance for great adventure can however be lost to us. If this feeling of living in a very fruitful and special period is not sensed by people generally, and by our representatives and civic leaders, the atomic adventure may be stifled in the throes of politics, of routine, of sluggishness and apathy. . . .

"There is evidence now and then that the shock and excitement of the Hiroshima blast has induced a kind of atomic neurosis, a constricting fear and hysteria that if allowed to continue and grow can distort our understanding of the true scope and meaning of the atomic development. . . .

"The development of atomic energy will pose many broad issues where the judgment of individual citizens will be essential, if they are to have a share in determining their democratic destiny. . . .

"What may be in people's minds a year or two hence depends in part on leadership in each community and upon how successful the press, the radio and education generally will be in inspiring people to think clearly about and to appreciate the force of the facts about atomic energy. . . .

"There is not a single one of us who is a mere spectator, who can turn a knob and tune himself out, or leave if he is bored, or horrified, or is more interested in his private affairs. We are all participants in that future chain of events that these epochal discoveries have set off. There are no supermen to solve these problems for us."*

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edges that along with war's horror and anguish there were the excitements of movement and friendship and later the discovery of a seductive foreign culture.

In the character of Jay Pignatelli, Dos Passos has made the fullest autobiographical gesture in his fiction. Author and hero share Latin names, mixed national origins, lawyer-scholar fathers, childhood tours of Europe, the experience of driving an army ambulance, immersion in radical politics, a passion for history, and an urge to write. But they diverge in the time of their disillusionment with left-wing movements—although Dos Passos still retains a nostalgic affection for the anarchists and pays them homage in an infectious, lightly disguised portrait of Carlo Tresca. By placing Jay's change of heart in the early 20's, *Chosen Country* becomes in a sense the first installment of Dos Passos' ideal or "chosen" spiritual autobiography. His feeling of obligation to history impels him to revise the informal contribution he made to it in *Three Soldiers* and *USA*. But he faces the dilemma that in fiction passionate error has a better chance of survival than mild and tempered clarity.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

FRANCIS GOLFFING is on the faculty of Bennington College, teaching in the field of the humanities.

ISAAC ROSENFELD, author of the novel *Passage from Home*, is now teaching at the University of Minnesota. He is also working on a new novel.

GEORGE LICHTHEIM is London correspondent for a number of Israeli newspapers, and a frequent contributor to the British magazine *Twentieth Century*. He has written a number of political articles for our pages.

MARK RAVEN'S most recent contribution to COMMENTARY, "Any Tears for Tisha B'av?" appeared in our August 1951 issue.

NATHAN GLICK has written literary and film criticism for COMMENTARY and other magazines. His most recent contribution to our pages, a discussion of two current movies, was published in our February 1952 issue.

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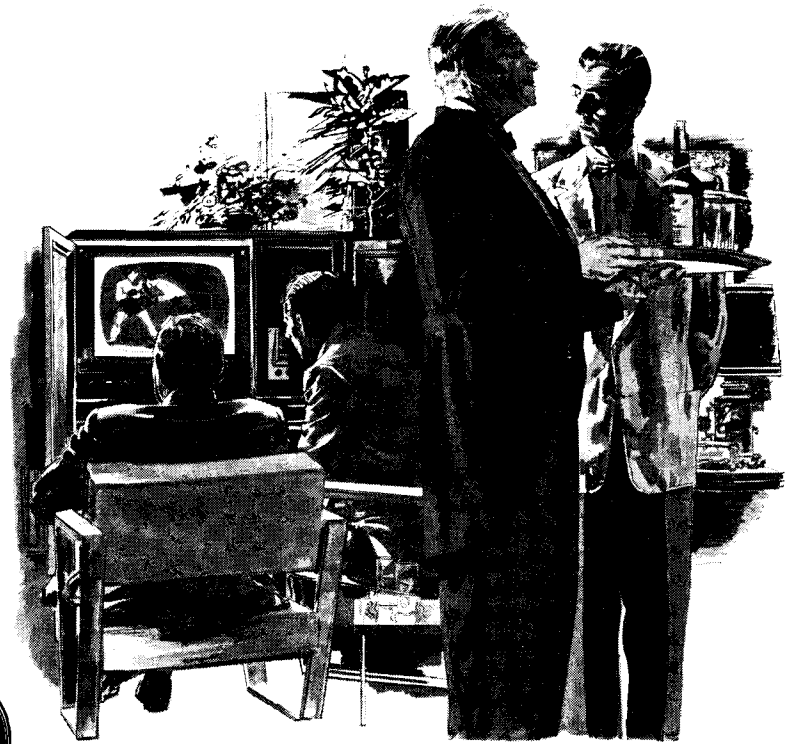

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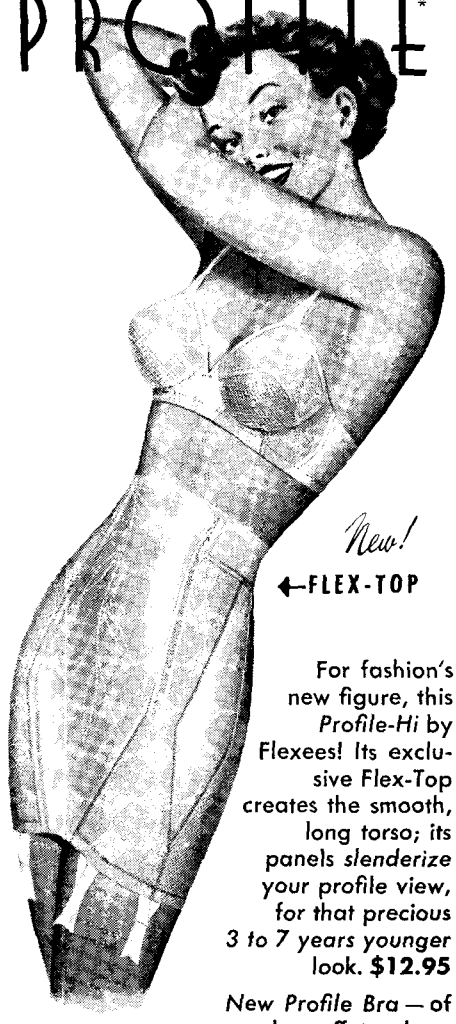

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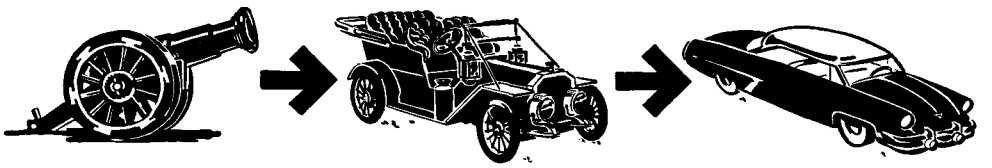

That little arrow between the pictures above is a chemist's sign for "is changed to" or "becomes." Chemists use it when they write out a formula.

We use it here to illustrate the history of the automobile. The first picture is that of a cannon, for the internal combustion engine is based on the same principle as is the cannon. Heat, generated in a cylinder, pushes a piston (or shell), and work is accomplished.

The chemist's arrow is especially fitting to show the change, for petroleum chemistry, creating gasoline, made the internal combustion engine possible. The "horseless carriage" was the result.

Then, in 1915, the American Oil Company developed a new kind of motor fuel—Amoco-Gas. It made possible another forward step in engine design, and it played a big part in changing motor travel from the "horseless carriage" days to the pleasurable thing it is today.

Amoco-Gas is still leading the way. It is still far ahead of any ordinary gasoline. And millions of car-owners from Maine to Florida will prove it to you.

AMERICAN AMOCO GAS

AMERICAN OIL COMPANY

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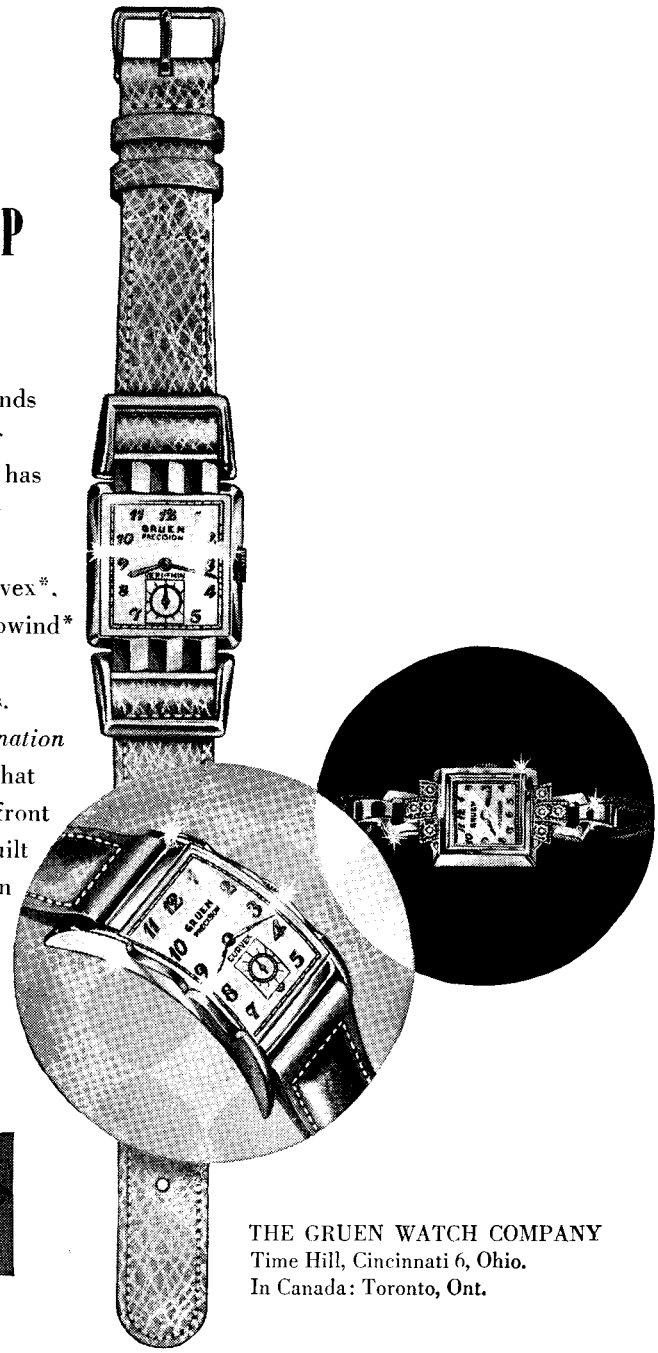
LEADERSHIP

In almost every field of endeavor, one company stands out above the rest — not for what it says, but for what it has done. In the watch industry Gruen can point with pride to the popularity of the Curvex*, the Veri-Thin*, and the Autowind* as characteristically distinguished achievements. This kind of *creative imagination* in styling and engineering that has kept Gruen far, far out front for more than 75 years is built into every watch your Gruen jeweler carries. It spells dependability . . . *and value!*



GRUEN
THE *Precision* WATCH

*Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

THE GRUEN WATCH COMPANY
Time Hill, Cincinnati 6, Ohio.
In Canada: Toronto, Ont.

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